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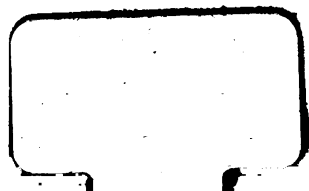
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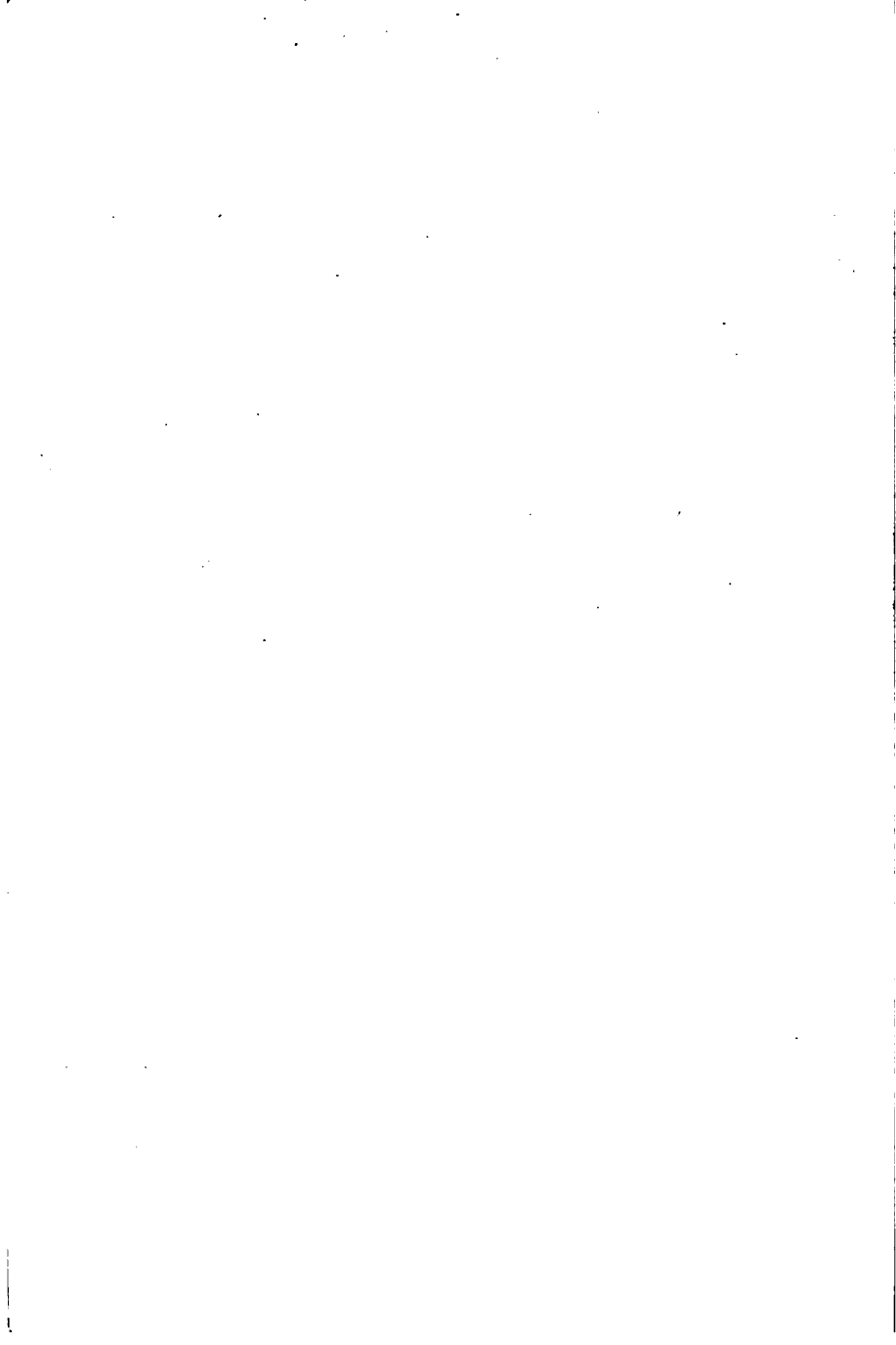
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AN
ATTIC PHILOSOPHER
IN PARIS

BY
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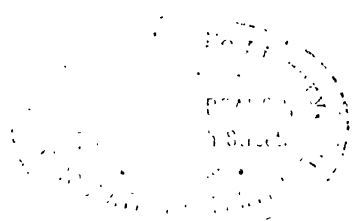
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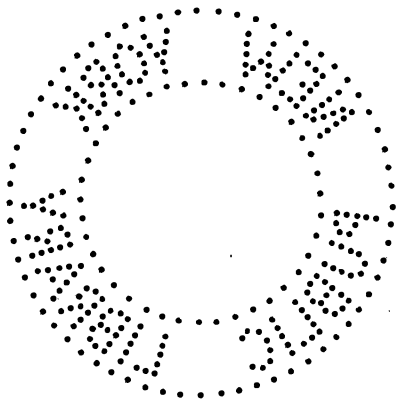
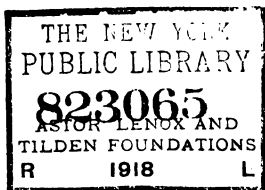
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1899

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TRANSFERRED TO : D. J.

INTRODUCTION.

SOUVESTRE'S best-known book belongs to a class of compositions that might be well denominated the "demi-classics." In the history of every literature certain books and authors challenge attention because of their long-continued popularity, but at the same time cause perplexity on account of the fact that authoritative criticism has made little or nothing of them. What the great public has enjoyed and continues to enjoy ought, it would seem, to be interesting and valuable; what the best trained and most impartial critics have almost uniformly passed over in silence ought not to be worth a busy reader's examination. Between these two quite natural judgments of a contradictory character the mind remains in a condition of suspense, and the literary work in question is sooner or later relegated to the class of the "demi-classics."

This is not the place to discuss the question how far critics are right or wrong in ignoring popular verdicts upon authors and books, or to inquire how long the conflict of opinion will keep up the life of a "demi-classic." Sometimes, as we know

through the case of the "Pilgrim's Progress," the critics are forced to give in, and the ignored or derided book becomes a veritable classic, but this consummation takes time and we are not concerned here with the literary opinions of future generations. We are more concerned with determining why *Un Philosophe sous les Toits* continues to win readers, but fails to attract the critics.

That it still finds readers is a fact easily proved. It is at least widely used as a text-book, it can be obtained in cheap editions, and translations of it are demanded. That the critics, on the other hand, pass it by in silence is clear from the fact that the two best recent manuals of the history of French literature that have been written by Frenchmen do not mention Souvestre or his most famous book, and that the same thing is true of the two best manuals written in English. Even in a lately published and minute study of the French fiction of this century, while Souvestre receives a perfunctory paragraph, his "Attic Philosopher" is not mentioned and he is said to be at his best in two books dealing with Brittany, one of which is not fiction at all! Clearly if these critics had been consulted Souvestre's sixty or more volumes would not have been issued in the famous cheap collection of Michael Lévy. But it is time to examine the author and his book for ourselves.

Émile Souvestre was born April 15, 1806, at Morlaix, in that conservative Brittany about which

he afterwards wrote so lovingly and well. He intended at first to be an engineer like his father, but the latter's death led to the abandonment of this idea and law studies were taken up which drew him to Paris at the age of twenty. As with many a young Frenchman before and since, his most important piece of luggage was a manuscript drama — a tragedy, which in 1826 was at least of contemporary interest, for its title was the "Siege of Missolonghi." He has himself given us a most pathetic account of his struggles to get this piece played even after it had been accepted by the Théâtre Français. Finally he fell ill — much as the Attic Philosopher did — and, smitten with home-sickness, returned to his native Brittany. He had, too, to support his mother, since his eldest brother had died. So he became first a bookseller's clerk at Nantes, then a school-master on a new system devised by a friend. In this latter occupation he had a partner whose sister he married, but wife and infant child died shortly and the partner did not prove a pleasant one.

Then he tried journalism at Brest, and wrote also for various journals, but he had strict principles and was at heart an educator. He therefore began teaching once more, first at Brest, afterwards in Alsace. But Paris still attracted him, for he was man of letters as well as teacher, and in 1836 he settled there with his family, for he had married again. His position had been more or

less assured by the publication of his sketches of Brittany, which quaint province he had been studying with loving care ever since fate had determined that he should not be a dramatic poet; and he won a livelihood and public respect by prolific and conscientious work in fiction. If he had been less prolific and less mediocre he would now be treated with more respect by the critics, but perhaps he would not have been any happier or any more useful.

This quiet life, marked only by the publication of book after book with a meticulous regularity that reminds one of Trollope, was broken into by the political disturbances of 1848. Souvestre was disappointed in his ambition to serve as a deputy, but his talents as an educator were brought into play in a training school for governmental officials and in a course of public readings designed for the dissemination of popular culture. The latter anticipation, on a modest but proper scale, of what has since been known as university extension, afforded him a very happy field for the exercise both of his genuine literary and educational powers and of his earnest moral zeal. He read selections from classical and popular authors to audiences composed mainly of workingmen, and he seems to have known how to combine instruction and entertainment in a very successful way. Ste. Beuve thought the new movement worthy of one of his *Causeries du Lundi* (21 janvier, 1850), and spoke of Souvestre's share in it with a respect

which might well make subsequent critics hesitate to treat the conscientious man of letters with such thorough neglect or such easy disdain. But the fall of the second republic put an end to the readings in Paris, and Souvestre had to try the experiment of lecturing in Switzerland, where he was received with enthusiasm. Meanwhile the French Academy had crowned his "Attic Philosopher" in 1851.

It is said that grief at the increasing luxury of society under the second empire helped to undermine his frail constitution and brought about his premature death on July 5, 1854. Be this as it may, it seems quite certain that he had done his life-work. He had stood bravely out for morality in all its phases and had doubtless done good to many individual readers, but he was not of the strenuous stuff to dominate an epoch, and the decline of France was not to be arrested by any mass of writings, much less by his uninspired compositions. His example had done good, as the Academy recognized when it awarded the "Prix Lambert" to his widow for his services to literature and morality; but as he himself confessed, he had attempted an artist's calling without an artist's aptitude and his influence could not be a lasting one. His allegiance had been divided between education and literature; hence it is no wonder that the sobriquet of "the schoolmaster in literature" is still applied to him, sometimes by people who have perhaps read only the most famous of

his numerous books. It is not a sobriquet that implies real reproach, but it is one that implies its bearer's comparative isolation among his fellow-men of letters who have been nothing if not artists, and it is one that argues depreciation of his talents in an age that claims to pursue and value art for art's own sake. It is time, however, to pass from the writer to the book that keeps his memory alive in spite of the silence of the critics. How is it that the "Attic Philosopher" has survived when one no longer reads "The Confessions of a Working-man," "The Breton Hearth," or any other of the long string of books produced in his eighteen years of labor in Paris? How is it that it has even cast in the shade the meritorious sketches of his native Brittany to be found in "Les Derniers Bretons"?

Such a question is not an easy one to answer about any book. The miscalculations made by publishers and professional readers are proverbial, and it is often no easier to explain a book's success than to prognosticate it. Sometimes the public seems to be subject to a sort of literary contagion; sometimes the critics suffer from literary myopia. Perhaps the latter is true with regard to the "Attic Philosopher." Not perceiving in the book the artistic qualities with which their range of vision is normally concerned, they have remained blind to other qualities which the public has perceived and enjoyed. To speak more concretely, they have probably framed definitions of

literature and its categories into which they cannot fit Souvestre's unpretentious volume.

It is not a story in any true sense of the word, and it is certainly not a novel. If it be regarded as a series of sketches, its workmanship is uneven, especially in the joining process, which is often coarsely mechanical. If it is a series of reflections or a sort of philosophical diary it is less charming and thoughtful than the pages of Senancour's "Obermann," and less piercingly pathetic and analytic than the pages of Amiel. In other words, the critics and the small public whose spokesmen they are find that they can get better elsewhere all that Souvestre offers them.

But they forget that Souvestre wrote nearly half a century ago and so could not answer many of the demands of a later and more sophisticated age, and they forget, too, that the reading public of the present day is fortunately not half so sophisticated as they try to believe. The public has not yet learned to appreciate fully the ineffable truths of the formula, "Art for art's sake," nor is it inclined to enjoy morbid introspection of the Amiel type. The public of to-day, like that to which Souvestre made his appeal, is largely composed of men and women who consider the substance of what they read rather than its form, who appreciate homely wisdom, whether conveyed in apt illustration or in sententious garb, whose emotions are easily stirred by simple tales or sketches of joy and woe, of love and hate, of triumph and

despair. Such a public does not relish over-seasoned literary food, because its appetite is a normal and a healthy one. It finds much to instruct it and much to charm it in the "Attic Philosopher," and therefore it enjoys and continues to read the book. In short it may fairly be contended that Souvestre understood the general reading public, and that many of his critics do not. But let us examine the matter a little more closely.

Surely the central conception of the "Attic Philosopher" is an effective one. A topmost chamber in a large Parisian house gives its occupant an opportunity to study all sorts and conditions of men. Each story as he ascends contains lodgers in a decreasing scale of wealth and social standing; thus he surveys a miniature world, and can study the characteristics of its inhabitants at his leisure. Our philosopher is a bachelor of a meditative turn, who can freely mingle with his neighbors' affairs or else brood upon his own. He is neither wise nor stupid, neither rich nor very poor, — he is an average man brought in contact with average people, whom he describes in a diary kept with considerable regularity. We have here materials both for effective sketches of Parisian life in the middle and lower grades of society and for a series of faithful observations of human character. And who can fairly deny that Souvestre has given them to us? His sketches may not be brilliant with color or firm in outline;

his observations may not be specially wise or witty; but both are surely, on the whole, true to life in its most important aspects.

It is quite true that in appealing to sentiment, as he often does, he runs the risk of becoming sentimental himself and of making his readers so. It is further true that if there were no sentimentality in the world the "Attic Philosopher" would not be a popular book. It both holds by and appeals to sentimentality, and this in some critics' eyes is a mortal offence. But not infrequently what strikes one reader as sentimentality appears to another to be pure, wholesome sentiment, and it is quite certain that Souvestre aimed to impart the latter only. And not infrequently he succeeded. The picture of *la mère Denis* regaling the three young Savoyards whose mothers would repay her in Paradise is fortunately true to nature, and thus far removed from the merely sentimental. So, too, the admirably described visit to the Sèvres potteries, concluding as it does with the touching act of charity performed by the two old-maid sisters, will offend only those sophisticated readers who bestow their alms on scientific principles.

We must, however, admit frankly that Souvestre is an artist who lays on his colors too thickly and indulges in too violent contrasts. The unselfishness of *la mère Denis* would impress us more deeply if it did not follow immediately upon the deplorable selfishness of M. Antoine, who neglects his family ties for the sake of his bargains in pict-

ures. The realists have taught us to expect subtler work, but it must be remembered that although Balzac was Souvestre's contemporary, the "Attic Philosopher" was written before the success of the great master's methods was fully apparent, and that even now a large portion of the reading public whose taste is thoroughly honest and respectable is not quite prepared to appreciate Balzac, but can appreciate Souvestre. In other words, the public has always demanded and will long continue to demand idealistic and romantic rather than realistic fiction, a fact which is amusingly illustrated by the further fact that one of the most popular novelists in France during the naturalistic period was a man whose stories were so poor from the point of view of literary form that they could not be published as books and had to die in the journals for which they had gained thousands of readers. This great law of public taste, for it is nothing less, was thoroughly understood by Souvestre, who never ceased to be a man of the people, and it seems almost idle to deprive him of the credit that is justly due to all men who understand and influence their fellows in the mass. It would be absurd to call him a great artist, but it would be equally absurd to deny that in some important respects he is a most effective writer.

Other laws or else characteristics of popular taste were also understood by Souvestre. He knew quite well that the public is not averse to

having a certain amount of the useful mingled with its pleasures, hence he indulged his school-master vein by moralizing, as in the reflections inspired by the collection of pottery, and by imparting specific information, as in the remarks on the origin of the name "July." He knew that a not oppressive use of learning is often attractive, and that a public that repeats proverbs will relish writing that is sententious and mildly epigrammatical. Thus he freely indulged himself in such aphorisms as:

"To enjoy the flower you must sow the seed and cultivate the young shoot."

"The question is not to know what suits us, but what we suit."

"It is only ignorance that can make a man a stranger to the life outside of him; even egoism does not suffice for that."

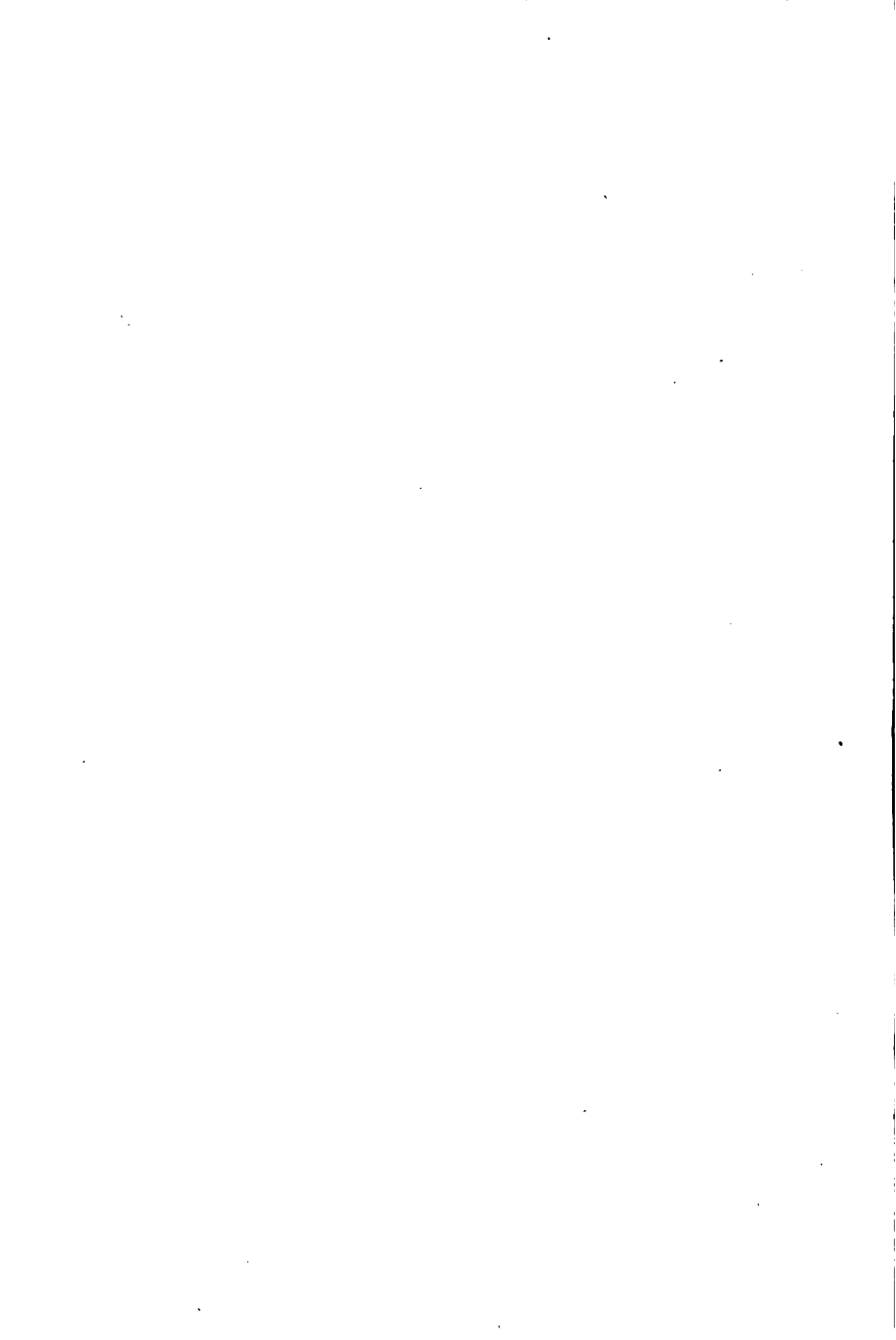
Of such bits of wisdom the "Attic Philosopher" is full, and those of us who care for them need not be in the least ashamed to own our liking. Some of the world's best literature is expressed in homely aphorisms, as Ben Franklin long since showed us. Souvestre, of course, is not always happy in his maxims, as, for example, when he indulges in a commonplace about the cumbrous money of the Spartans; but on the whole he has made his book quite a repertory of quotable passages. But he has also done something more—something far higher in the range of literary art. He has given us some excellent character-

ization, as in his portrait of the old soldier, Chau-four; some good description, as in the account of the lonely farmhouse and its occupants; and some effective narration, as in the simple story of Uncle Maurice. For these good points, which deserve something better than critical disdain, we may well forgive the commonplaces, the mechanical devices that are only too apparent in the book. We can also afford to overlook such an absence of realistic truthfulness as is evidenced in the account of the Philosopher's illness, when the physician delivers a long harangue to his patient, who has just recovered consciousness after an illness of twenty-eight days, and then takes his leave, declaring that his visits are no longer necessary. Such inconsiderateness, whether of his patient or of his fees, has never characterized a physician since the days of *Æsculapius*; nor would the veriest tyro in fiction make such a blunder in description at the present day. But for the sake of its optimism, its idealism, its wholesome sentiment, we could forgive the "Attic Philosopher" worse blunders than this.

It is quite apparent, in conclusion, that a good case can be made out for the public's affection for Souvestre and his famous book. The mass of readers know what they want, and while it is always proper for the critic to try to elevate the popular taste, it smacks a little of impertinence for him either to pass by in silence writers who have won public recognition, or to lecture mature

men and women as though they were school-children, because they insist on reading the books that please them. The "Attic Philosopher" has pleased and will continue to please thousands of intelligent readers, and it is a pity that there are not more such pure and wholesome books in general circulation.

W. P. TRENT.



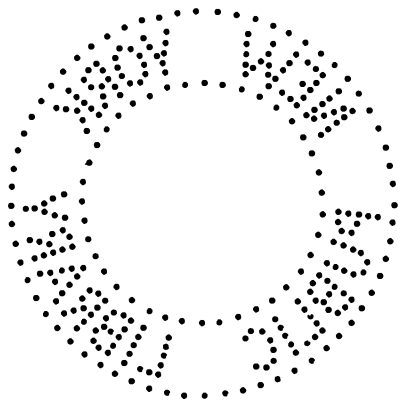
ADVERTISEMENT.

WE know a man who, in the midst of the fever of restlessness and of ambition which racks society in our time, continues to fill his humble part in the world without a murmur, and who still preserves a taste for poverty. With no other fortune than a small clerkship, which enables him to live within the narrow limits separating competence from want, our philosopher looks from the height of his attic upon society as upon a sea, whose riches he does not covet and whose shipwrecks he does not fear. Too insignificant to excite envy, he sleeps peacefully, wrapped in his obscurity.

Not that he retreats into egotism, as a tortoise crawls into its shell! He is like the man of whom Terence says that "nothing human is foreign to him!" All external objects and incidents are reflected in his mind as in a camera where their forms are pictured, where their images are presented as

in a picture. He "looks at society as it is," with the inquiring patience of the recluse; and he writes a monthly journal of what he has seen or thought. It is the "Calendar of his Impressions," as he is wont to call it.

We have been allowed to look it over, and have extracted some pages which may acquaint the reader with the commonplace adventures of an unknown thinker in those twelve hostilities of Time called Months.



AN ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ATTIC NEW-YEAR'S GIFTS.

JANUARY 1st. — This date came to me as soon as I woke. Another year is separated from the chain of the ages, and drops into the gulf of the past! The crowd hasten to welcome their young sister. But while all look forward, I look back. Every one smiles upon the new queen; but, in spite of myself, I think of the year that time has just wrapped in her winding-sheet. The past year! — at least I know what she has given me; while this one comes surrounded by all the forebodings of the unknown. What does she hide in the clouds which mantle her? Is it storm or sunshine? Just now it rains, and my mind seems as gloomy as the sky. I have a holiday to-day; but what can one do with a rainy day? I walk up and down my attic

2 AN ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS.

out of temper, and determine to light my fire.

Unfortunately the matches are bad, the chimney smokes, the fire will not burn. I throw down my bellows in disgust, and sink into my old arm-chair.

In truth, why should I rejoice to see the birth of a new year? All those who are already in the streets, with holiday looks and smiling faces, — do they understand what makes them so gay? Do they even know the meaning of this holiday, or whence comes the custom of New Year's gifts?

Here my mind pauses to assure itself of its superiority — over the vulgar mind. I make a parenthesis in my ill-humor in favor of my vanity, and bring together all the evidence which my knowledge can produce.

(The old Romans divided the year into only ten months; Numa Pompilius added January and February. The former took its name from Janus, to whom it was dedicated. As it opened the new year, they surrounded its beginning with good omens, and thence came the custom of neighborly visits, of good wishes, and of New Year's gifts. The presents given by the Romans were symbolic. They consisted of dry figs, dates, honeycomb,

as emblems of "the sweetness of the auspices under which the year should begin its course," with a small piece of money called *stips*, which foretold riches.)

Here I close the parenthesis, and return to my ill-humor. The little speech¹ I have just addressed to myself has made me more content with myself, but less so with others. I would get breakfast, but the portress has forgotten my morning's milk, and the jam-pot is empty! Another would be vexed, but I affect supreme indifference. A hard crust remains, which I break by main force, and carelessly nibble, as a man far above the vanities of the world and of fresh rolls.

Still, I do not know why my thoughts should grow more gloomy by reason of the difficulties of mastication. I once read the story of an Englishman who hung himself because they had brought him his tea without sugar. There are times in life when the most trifling annoyance becomes a calamity. Our moods are like an opera glass which, according to the end used, shows objects diminished or enlarged.

Generally the prospect which opens out before my window delights me. It is a

¹ *Spitch*, in the original.

4 AN ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS.

mountain range of roofs, with ridges crossing, interlacing, and piled one upon another, from which tall chimneys raise their peaks. It was but yesterday that they had an Alpine look to me, and I waited for the first snow-storm to see glaciers among them; to-day I only see tiles and chimney pots. The pigeons, which helped my rural illusions, seem only miserable birds which have mistaken the roof for the back yard; the smoke, which rises in light clouds, instead of making me dream of the panting of Vesuvius, reminds me of kitchen preparations and dishwater; and lastly, the telegraph, that I see far off on the old tower of Montmartre, has the effect of a wretched gallows stretching its arms over the city.

My eyes, offended by all that they meet, fall upon the great man's house opposite my attic.

The influence of New Year's day is visible there. The servants have an air of eagerness proportioned to the value of the gifts, received or expected. I see the master of the house crossing the court with the morose look of a man who is forced to be generous; and the visitors increase, followed by errand-boys who carry flowers, bandboxes, or toys.

All at once the great gates are opened, and a new carriage, drawn by thoroughbred horses, draws up before the steps. They are, without doubt, the New Year's gift presented to the mistress of the house by her husband, for she comes herself to look at the new equipage. Very soon she enters it with a little girl, all fluttering with laces, feathers, and velvet, and loaded with parcels which she is going to distribute as New Year's gifts. The door is shut, the windows are drawn up, the carriage sets off.

Thus all the world are exchanging good wishes and presents to-day: I alone have nothing to give or to receive. Poor Solitary! I do not even know one chosen being for whom to offer prayer.

Then let my wish for a happy New Year seek out all my unknown friends — lost in the sound of the multitude at my feet!

To you first, hermits of the town, for whom death and poverty have made a solitude in the midst of the crowd! melancholy toilers, condemned to eat, in silence and loneliness, the bread gained each day, and whom God has cut off from the intoxicating anguish of love or friendship!

To you, fond dreamers, who pass through

6 AN ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS.

life with your eyes turned toward some polar star, marching indifferently over the rich harvests of reality !

To you, brave fathers, who lengthen out the day to feed your families ! to you, poor widows, weeping and working by a cradle ! to you, young men, striving to open for yourselves a path broad enough to lead by the hand the wife of your choice ! to you all, brave soldiers of work and of self-sacrifice !

To you lastly, whatever your title and your name, who love good, who pity the suffering, who walk through the world like the symbolic Virgin of Byzantium, with arms wide open to the human race !

— Here I am suddenly interrupted by loud and increasing chirpings. I look about me : my window is surrounded with sparrows picking up the crumbs of bread which in my brown study I just scattered on the roof. At this sight a flash of light broke upon my sad heart. I was mistaken just now, when I complained that I had nothing to give : thanks to me, the sparrows of this region will have their New Year's gifts !

Twelve o'clock. — A knock at my door ; a poor girl comes in, and greets me by name. At first I do not recall her ; but she looks at

me, and smiles. Ah, it is Paulette! But it is nearly a year since I have seen her, and Paulette is no longer the same: the other day she was a child; to-day she is almost a young woman.

Paulette is thin, pale, and miserably clad; but she has always the same open and straightforward look — the same mouth, smiling at every word, as if to plead for sympathy — the same voice, timid, yet caressing. Paulette is not pretty — she is even thought plain; as for me, I think her charming. Perhaps that is not on her account, but on my own. Paulette is a part of one of my happiest recollections.

It was the evening of a public holiday. Our principal buildings were lighted with festoons of fire, a thousand flags floated in the night wind, and the fire-works had just shot forth their jets of flame in the midst of the Champ de Mars. Suddenly one of those unaccountable panics which seize a multitude falls upon the dense crowd: they cry out, they rush on headlong; the weaker ones fall, and the frightened crowd tramples them down in its convulsive struggles. Escaping from the confusion by a miracle, I was hastening away, when the cries of a perishing

8 AN ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS.

child arrested me; I went back into that human chaos, and, after unheard-of exertions, I brought Paulette away at the peril of my life.

That was two years ago; since then I had seen the child only at long intervals, and had almost forgotten her; but Paulette had a grateful heart, and she came at the beginning of the year to bring me her good wishes. She brought me, too, a wallflower in full bloom; she herself had planted and reared it: it was something that belonged wholly to herself; for it was because of her care, her perseverance, and her patience that it was hers.

The wallflower had grown in a common pot; but Paulette, who is a bandbox-maker, had put it into a case of varnished paper, ornamented with arabesques. These might have been in better taste, but I felt the good-will none the less.

This unexpected present, the little girl's modest blushes, the compliments she stammered out, dispelled, as by a sunbeam, the mist which had gathered round my heart; my thoughts suddenly changed from the leaden tints of evening to the rosiest colors of dawn. I made Paulette sit down, and questioned her with a light heart.

At first the little girl replied by monosyllables; but very soon the tables were turned, and it was I who interrupted with short interjections her long confidences. The poor child leads a hard life. She was left an orphan long ago, and with a brother and sister lives with an old grandmother, who has *brought them up to poverty*, as she always says.

However, Paulette now helps her to make bandboxes, her little sister Perrine begins to sew, and her brother Henry is apprenticed to a printer. All would go well if it were not for losses and want of work — if it were not for clothes which wear out, for appetites which grow larger, and for the winter, when you must buy your sunshine. Paulette complains that candles go too quickly, and that the wood costs too much. The fireplace in their garret is so large that a fagot produces no more effect than a match; it is so near the roof that the wind blows down the rain, and in winter it hails upon the hearth; so they have given up using it. Henceforth they must be content with an earthen chafing-dish, upon which they cook their meals. The grandmother had often spoken of a stove that was for sale at the huckster's on the

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ground floor, but he asked seven francs for it, and the times are too hard for such an expense; the family, therefore, resign themselves to cold for economy's sake!

As Paulette spoke I felt more and more that I was rising above my low spirits. The first disclosures of the little bandbox-maker created within me a wish that soon became a plan. I questioned her about her daily occupations, and she told me that on leaving me she must go, with her brother, her sister, and grandmother, to the different people for whom they work. My plan was immediately settled. I told the child that I would go to see her in the evening, and I sent her away, thanking her anew.

I placed the wallflower in the open window, where a ray of sunshine bade it welcome; the birds were singing around, the sky had cleared, and the day, which began so gloomily, had become bright. I sang as I moved about my room, and, having hastily got ready, I went out.

Three o'clock.—All is settled with my neighbor, the chimney doctor: he will repair my old stove, the old stove which I had replaced, and promises to make it as good as new. At five o'clock we are going to put it up in Paulette's grandmother's room.

Midnight.—All has gone well. At the hour agreed upon I was at the old bandbox-maker's; she was still out. My Piedmontese¹ fixed the stove, while I arranged a dozen logs in the great fireplace, borrowed from my winter's stock. I shall make up for them by warming myself with walking, or by going to bed earlier.

My heart beat at every step which was heard on the staircase; I trembled lest they should interrupt me in my preparations, and should thus spoil my intended surprise. But no—everything is ready: the lighted stove murmurs gently, the little lamp burns upon the table, and a bottle of oil for it is provided on the shelf. The chimney doctor is gone. Now my fear lest they should come is changed into impatience at their delay. At last I hear children's voices; here they are: they push open the door and rush in—but they stop with cries of astonishment.

At sight of the lamp, the stove, and the visitor, who stands there like a magician in the midst of these wonders, they draw back almost frightened. Paulette is the first to understand, and the arrival of the grand-

¹In Paris a chimney sweeper is named "Piedmontese" or "Savoyard," as they usually come from that country.

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mother, mounting the stairs more slowly, finishes the explanation. Then come tears, ecstasies, thanks !

Surprises are not over yet. The little sister opens the oven, and discovers some chestnuts just roasted ; the grandmother puts her hand on the bottles of cider arranged on the dresser ; and I draw forth, from the basket that I have hidden, a cold tongue, a wedge-shaped piece of butter, and some fresh rolls.

Now their wonder turns into admiration ; the little family have never taken part in such a feast ! They lay the cloth, they sit down, they eat ; it is a perfect festival for all, and each contributes his share to it. I had brought only the supper ; the band-box-maker and the children supplied the enjoyment.

What bursts of laughter at nothing ! What a hubbub of questions which waited for no reply, of replies which answered no question ! The old woman herself shared in the wild merriment of the little ones ! I have always wondered at the ease with which the poor forget their wretchedness. Accustomed to live in the present, they use every pleasure as soon as it offers itself. But the rich, blunted by luxury, gain happiness less easily. They

must have all things in harmony before they consent to be happy.

The evening passed like a moment. The old woman has told me the story of her life, sometimes smiling, sometimes crying. Perine has sung an old ballad with her fresh young voice. Henry has told us what he knows of the great writers of the day, whose proofs he has to carry. At last we were obliged to separate, not without new thanks on the part of the happy family.

I have come home slowly, with a full heart, thinking over the pure memories of this evening. It has given me much comfort and much instruction. Now the years can come and go. I know that no one is so unhappy as to have nothing to receive, and nothing to give.

As I came in I met my rich neighbor's new equipage. She, too, had just returned from her evening party; and, as she sprang from the carriage-step with feverish impatience, I heard her murmur — *At last!*

I, when I left Paulette's family, said — *So soon!*

CHAPTER II.

THE CARNIVAL.

FEBRUARY 20TH. — What a noise out of doors! What is the meaning of these shouts and cries? Ah! I recollect: this is the last day of the Carnival, and the maskers are going by.

Christianity has not been able to abolish the bacchanalian festivals of pagan times; it has only changed their names. What it has given to these "days of liberty" announces the ending of the feasts and the month of fasting which must follow — "*carn-i-val*" means, literally, "*down with meat!*" It is a forty days' farewell to the "blessed pullets and fat hams," so celebrated by Pantagruel's minstrel. Man prepares for privation by satiety, and finishes his sin before beginning to do penance.

Why, in all ages and among all peoples, do we meet with some one of these mad festivals? Must we believe that for men reason is such an effort that the weaker ones need to rest at intervals? The monks of La Trappe, who are condemned to silence by their order, are allowed to speak once in a month, and on this

day they all talk at once from the rising to the setting of the sun.

Perhaps it is the same in the world! Since we are obliged all the year to be decent, orderly, sensible, we must indemnify ourselves for our long constraint. It is an open door for incongruous fancies, until then tucked away in the corner of our brains. As in the days of the Saturnalia, the slaves for a moment become the masters, and everything is given up to the "fools of the house."

The shouts in the Square redouble; the troops of masks increase — on foot, in carriages, and on horseback. The aim is to see who can attract the most attention by making a figure for a few hours, or by exciting curiosity or envy; to-morrow they will all return, dull and exhausted, to the employments and troubles of yesterday.

Alas! thought I with vexation, each one of us is like these masqueraders: too often our whole life is but an unsightly Carnival! And yet man has need of holidays, to relax his mind, rest his body, and open his heart. Can he not have them, then, without these coarse pleasures? Economists have been long seeking for the best disposal of the activity of the

human race. Ah, if I could only discover the best use of its leisure! There is no difficulty in finding its work; but how to find its relaxation! Work provides the daily bread; but gayety gives it its relish. O philosophers! go in quest of pleasure; find us amusements without brutality, enjoyments without selfishness; in a word, invent a Carnival which will please every one and bring shame to none.

Three o'clock.—I have just shut my window, and stirred up my fire. As this is a holiday for everybody, I will make it one for myself too. So I light the little lamp over which, on grand occasions, I make a cup of the coffee that my portress' son brought from the Levant, and I look in my bookcase for one of my favorite authors.

First, here is the amusing parson of Meudon; but his characters are too fond of talking slang. Voltaire — Lesage; let us stop here; but by always railing at men he discourages them. Molière; but he keeps you from laughing by making you think; profound rather than grave, he preaches virtue while ridiculing vice; if bitterness is sometimes to be found in his writings it is always in the garb of mirth: he sees the

miseries of the world without despising it, and knows its cowardliness without hating it.

Let us call up all the heroes of his book : Gil Blas, Fabrice, Sangrado, the Archbishop of Granada, the Duke of Lerma, Aurora, Scipio ! Gay or graceful figures, rise before my eyes ; people my solitude ; bring hither for my amusement the world-carnival, of which you are the brilliant masks !

Unfortunately, just when I uttered this invocation I remembered that I had a letter to write which could not be put off. One of my attic neighbors came yesterday to ask me to write it for him. He is a lively little old man, and has a passion for pictures and prints. He comes home almost every day with a drawing or painting — probably of little value ; for I know he lives meanly, and even the letter that I am to write for him shows his poverty. His only son, who was married in England, is just dead, and his widow, left without any means, and with an old mother and a child, had written to beg for a home. M. Antoine asked me first to translate the letter and then to write a refusal. I had promised that he should have this answer to-day : before everything else, let us keep our promises !

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The sheet of "Bath" paper is before me, I have dipped my pen into the ink, and I rub my forehead to provoke a flow of ideas, when I find that I have not my dictionary. Now, a Parisian who would speak English without a dictionary is like a child without leading-strings; the ground trembles under him, and he stumbles at the first step. I run to the bookbinder's where I left my "Johnson," who lives close by in the Square.

The door is half open; I hear low groans; I enter without knocking, and I see the bookbinder by the bedside of his fellow-lodger. The latter has a violent fever with delirium. Pierre looks at him with an air of perplexed ill-humor. I learn from him that his comrade was not able to get up in the morning, and that since then he has become worse from hour to hour.

I ask if they have sent for a doctor.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" replied Pierre roughly; "one must have money in one's pocket for that, and this fellow has only debts instead of savings."

"But you," said I, rather astonished; "are you not his friend?"

"Friend?" interrupted the bookbinder.

"Yes, as much as the shaft-horse is friend

to the leader — on condition that each will take his share of the draught, and eat his feed by himself."

"But you do not mean to leave him without any help?"

"Bah! he can have all the bed till to-morrow, as I'm going to the ball."

"You mean to leave him alone?"

"Well! must I miss a party of pleasure at Courtville¹ because this fellow is light-headed?" asked Pierre sharply. "I have promised to meet some friends at old Desnoyer's. Those who are sick may take their broth; my physic is white wine."

So saying, he untied a bundle, out of which he took the fancy costume of a waterman, and proceeded to put it on.

In vain I tried to awaken some fellow-feeling for the unfortunate man who lay groaning there, close by him; quite absorbed in his expected pleasure, Pierre listens to me impatiently. At length, driven to desperation by this brutal selfishness, I pass from remonstrances to reproaches; I tell him that he is responsible for what may follow from leaving the sick man.

At this the bookbinder, who was just going,

¹ A Paris Vauxhall.

stopped with an oath, and stamping his foot, exclaimed: "Am I to spend my Carnival in heating water for foot-baths, pray?"

"You must not leave your comrade to die without help," I answered.

"Let him go to the hospital, then!"

"How could he go alone?"

Pierre seemed to make up his mind.

"Well, I'm going to take him," resumed he; "besides, I shall get rid of him the sooner. Come, stand up, comrade!" He shook his comrade, who had not taken off his clothes. I saw that he was too weak to walk, but the bookbinder would not listen: he made him get up, and half dragged, half supported him to the lodge of the porter, who ran for a cab. I saw the sick man get into it, almost fainting, with the impatient waterman; and they both set off, one to die, perhaps, the other to dine at Courtville gardens!

Six o'clock. — Just knocked at my neighbor's door, who opened it himself; I have given him his letter, finished at last, and directed to his son's widow. M. Antoine thanked me gratefully, and made me sit down.

It was the first time I had been into the attic of the old amateur. Curtains stained with

dampness, and hanging in rags, a cold stove, a straw bed, two broken chairs, were all the furniture. At the end of the room was a great pile of prints, and paintings without frames were turned to the wall.

At the moment I entered, the old man was making his dinner on some hard crusts of bread, which he was soaking in a glass of *eau sucrée*. He saw that my eyes fell upon his hermit fare, and he blushed a little.

"My supper does not tempt you, neighbor?" said he with a smile.

I replied that at least I thought it a very philosophical one for Carnival time.

M. Antoine shook his head and went on with his meal.

"Every one keeps his holiday in his own way," resumed he, beginning again to dip a crust into his glass. "There are epicures of various kinds, and all feasts are not meant to regale the palate; there are some also for ears and for eyes."

I looked involuntarily round me, as if to seek for the invisible feast which could make amends to him for such a supper.

Without doubt he understood me; for he rose slowly, and, with the magisterial air of a man confident of what he is about to do, he

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rummaged behind several picture-frames, drew forth a painting, over which he passed his hand, and silently placed it under the light of the lamp.

It represented a fine-looking old man, seated at table with his wife, his daughter, and her children, and singing to the accompaniment of musicians who appeared in the background. At first sight I recognized the subject, which I had often admired at the Louvre, and declared it to be a splendid copy of Jordaens.

"A copy?" cried M. Antoine; "say an original, neighbor, and an original retouched by Rubens! Look closer at the head of the old man, the dress of the young woman, and the accessories. One can count the pencil strokes of the Hercules of painters. It is not only a masterpiece, sir; it is a treasure — a relic! The picture at the Louvre may be a pearl; this is a diamond!"

And resting it against the stove, so as to place it in the best light, he fell again to soaking his crusts, without taking his eyes off the wonderful picture. One would have said that the sight of it gave the crusts an unexpected delicacy, for he chewed them slowly, and emptied his glass a little at a

time. His shrivelled features became smooth, his nostrils expanded; it was indeed, as he said himself, *a feast for the eyes*.

"You see that I also have my treat," resumed he, nodding his head with an air of triumph. Others may run after dinners and balls; as for me, this makes my Carnival!"

"But if this painting is really so precious," replied I, "it must be worth a high price."

"Eh, eh!" said M. Antoine, with an air of proud indifference. "In good times a good judge might value it at about twenty thousand francs."

I started back.

"And you have bought it?" cried I.

"For nothing," replied he, lowering his voice. "These brokers are asses; mine mistook this for a pupil's copy; he let me have it for fifty louis, ready money! This morning I took them to him, and now he wishes in vain to cancel the bargain."

"This morning!" repeated I, involuntarily casting my eyes on the letter containing the refusal that M. Antoine had made me write to his son's widow, and which was still on the little table.

He took no notice of my exclamation, and

went on contemplating the work of Jordaens in a kind of ecstasy.

"What a knowledge of chiaroscuro!" murmured he, biting his last crust in delight. "What relief! What fire! Where can one find such transparency of color, such magical lights, such strength, such knowledge of nature?"

As I was listening to him in silence, he mistook my astonishment for admiration, and clapped me on the shoulder.

"You are dazzled," said he merrily; "you did not expect such a treasure! What do you say to my bargain?"

"Pardon me," replied I gravely; "but I think you might have done better."

M. Antoine raised his head.

"How?" cried he; "do you take me for a man likely to be deceived as to the merit or value of a painting?"

"I neither doubt your taste nor your skill; but I cannot help thinking that, for the price of this picture of a family party, you might have had" —

"What, then?"

"The family itself, sir."

The old amateur cast a look at me, not of anger, but of disdain. In his eyes I had evi-

dently just proved myself a barbarian, unable to understand the arts, and unworthy to enjoy them. He got up without answering me, hastily took up the Jordaens, and put it back in its hiding-place behind the prints.

It was a sort of dismissal; I took leave of him, and went away.

Seven o'clock. — When I come in again I find the water boiling over my little lamp, and I busy myself in grinding my Mocha and preparing my coffee pot.

Getting the coffee ready is the most delicate and attractive of domestic operations to one who lives alone; it is the masterpiece of a bachelor's housekeeping.

Coffee holds just the happy mean between bodily and spiritual nourishment. It acts agreeably, both upon the senses and the thoughts. Its very fragrance gives a sort of delightful activity to the spirit; it is a genius who lends wings to our fancy, and bears it to the land of the Arabian Nights.

When I am buried in my old easy-chair, my feet on the fender before a blazing fire, my ear soothed by the singing of the coffee pot, which seems to gossip with my fire-irons, the sense of smell gently excited by the aroma of the Arabian berry, and my eyes shaded by

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my cap pulled down over them, it often seems as if each cloud of the fragrant steam took a distinct form. I see in turn, as in the mirage of the desert, images which I would gladly make realities.

At first the vapor increases, and its color deepens. I see a cottage on a hillside: behind it is a garden shut in by a white-thorn hedge, and through the garden runs a brook, on the banks of which I hear the bees humming.

Then the view opens still more. Here are fields planted with apple trees, where I see a plough and horses waiting for their master. Farther on, in a part of the wood which rings with the sound of the axe, I perceive the woodsman's hut, roofed with turf and branches; and, in the midst of all these rural pictures, I seem to see a figure of myself gliding about. It is my spirit wandering through my dreams!

The bubbling of the water, ready to boil over, compels me to break off my meditations, so as to fill up the coffee pot. I then remember that I have no cream; I take my tin can off the hook and go down to the milk woman's.

Mother Denis is a hale countrywoman who

came in her youth from Savoy ; and, contrary to the custom of the Savoyards, she has not gone back there again. She has neither husband nor child, notwithstanding the title they give her ; but her kindness, always on the watch, makes her worthy of the name of Mother.

A brave creature ! Left by herself in the battle of life, she makes good her humble place by working, singing, helping others, and leaving the rest to God.

At the door of the milk-shop I hear loud bursts of laughter. In one corner of the shop three children are sitting on the ground. They wear the sooty dress of Savoyard boys, and in their hands are large slices of bread and cheese. The youngest is besmeared up to the eyes with his, which causes their mirth.

Mother Denis points them out to me.

“ Look at the little lambs, how they enjoy themselves ! ” said she, putting her hand on the head of the little glutton.

“ He has had no breakfast,” puts in one of the others, by way of excuse.

“ Poor little one,” said the milkwoman ; “ he is left alone in the streets of Paris, where he has no other father than the good God ! ”

"And that is why you make yourself a mother to them?" I replied gently.

"What I do is little enough," said Mother Denis, measuring out my milk; "but every day I get some of them together out of the street, that for once they may eat their fill. Dear children! their mothers will make up for it in heaven. Besides, they recall to me my native mountains; when they sing and dance I seem to see our grandfather again."

Here her eyes filled with tears.

"So you are repaid by your recollections for the good you do them?" resumed I.

"Yes! Yes!" said she, "and by their happiness too! The laughter of these little ones, sir, is like a bird's song; it makes you gay, and gives you the courage to live."

As she spoke she cut some fresh slices of bread and cheese, and added some apples and a handful of nuts.

"Come, my little ones," she cried, "put these in your pockets for to-morrow."

Then, turning to me —

"To-day I am ruining myself," added she; "but we must all have our Carnival."

I came away without saying a word; I was too much moved.

At last I have discovered what true pleasure

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is. After having seen the egotism of sensuality and of intellect I have found the happy devotion of goodness. Pierre, M. Antoine, and Mother Denis had each kept his Carnival; but for the two first it was only a feast for the senses or the mind; while for the third it was a feast for the heart.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN BY LOOKING OUT OF WINDOW.

MARCH 3d. — A poet has said that life is the dream of a shadow; he would have done better to compare it to a night of fever! What alternations of restlessness and sleep! What discomfort! What sudden starts! What ever-returning thirst! What a chaos of mournful or confused fancies! Always between sleeping and waking, we seek in vain for repose, and stop on the brink of action. Two thirds of human existence are wasted in hesitation, and the last third in repentance.

When I say *human existence* I mean my own! We are so made that each of us re-

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gards himself as the mirror of society ; what passes in our own minds infallibly seems to us the history of the universe. Every man is like the drunkard who reports an earthquake because he feels himself staggering.

And why am I uncertain and restless, — I, a poor day-laborer in the world, — who fill an obscure place in a corner, and whose work it uses, without heeding the workman ? I will tell you, my unseen friend, for whom these lines are written ; my unknown brother, on whom the solitary call in sorrow ; my imaginary confidant, to whom all monologues are addressed, and who is but the shadow of my own consciousness.

A great event has come into my life ! A cross-road has suddenly opened in the midst of the monotonous way along which I was travelling quietly and unthinkingly. Two roads present themselves, one of which I must choose. One is only the continuation of what I have followed till now ; the other is wider, and opens out wonderful vistas. On the first there is nothing to fear, but also little to hope ; on the other great dangers and rich successes. In a word, the question is, whether I shall give up the humble office in which I expected to die, for one of those bold specula-

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tions in which chance alone is banker! Ever since yesterday I have consulted with myself; I have compared the two, and I remain undecided.

From whence will light come? Who will help me?

Sunday 4th. — See the sun emerging from the mists of winter; spring announces its approach; a soft breeze glides over the roofs, and my wallflower begins to bloom again.

We are near that sweet season of *fresh green* of which the poets of the sixteenth century sang with so much feeling:

“ Now the gladsome month of May
All things newly doth array;
Fairest lady, let me too
In thy love my life renew.”

The chirping of the sparrows calls me; they claim the crumbs that I scatter for them every morning. I open my window, and the perspective of the roofs opens out before me in all its splendor.

He who has only lived on a first floor has no suspicion of the picturesque variety of such a view. He has never watched these interlacing roofs, to which the tiles give color; he has never studied these valleys of

gutters where fresh gardens are waving; the deep shadows which evening spreads over the slated slopes; and the sparkling of windows which the setting sun has kindled to a blaze. He has not studied the flora of these Alps of civilization, carpeted by lichens and mosses; he is not acquainted with the thousand inhabitants which people them, from the tiny insect to the domestic cat, — that Reynard of the roofs who is prowling about or lying in wait; he has not witnessed the varied aspects of a clear or a cloudy sky, nor the thousand effects of light, which make these upper regions a theatre with ever-changing scenes! How many times have my days of leisure been passed in contemplating this wonderful sight; in discovering its darker or brighter episodes; in seeking, in short, in this unknown world for the *impressions of travel* that wealthy tourists look for lower down!

Nine o'clock. — But why have not my winged neighbors picked up the crumbs I have scattered for them before my window? I see them fly away, come back, perch upon the ledges of the windows, and chirp at sight of the feast they are usually so eager to devour! It is not my presence that frightens them; I have accustomed them to eat out of



The perspective of the roofs opens out before me in all its splendor.



my hand. Then why is this timid irresolution? In vain I look around: the roof is clear, the neighboring windows are closed. I crumble the bread that remains from my breakfast to attract them by an ampler feast. Their chirpings increase, they bend down their heads, the boldest approach upon the wing, but without daring to light.

My sparrows are the victims of one of the foolish panics which make the funds drop at the Bourse! It is plain that birds are no more reasonable than men!

With this reflection I was about to shut my window, when all of a sudden I perceived, in a spot of sunshine on my right, the shadow of two pricked-up ears; then a paw advanced, then the head of a striped cat showed itself at the angle of the gutter. The cunning fellow was lying there in wait, hoping the crumbs would bring him some game.

And I had accused my guests of cowardice! I was so sure that no danger threatened them! I thought I had looked everywhere! I had only forgotten the corner behind me!

In life, as on the roofs, how many misfortunes come from having forgotten a single corner!

Ten o'clock. — I cannot leave my window;

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the rain and the cold have kept it shut so long that I must explore all the environs so as to take possession of them again. My eyes search in turn all the points of this confused prospect, passing on or stopping according to what they light upon.

Ah ! see the windows where they formerly loved to rest ; they are those of two unknown neighbors, whose different habits I have long noticed.

One is a poor workwoman, who rises before sunrise, and whose profile is outlined upon her little muslin window-curtain far into the evening ; the other is a young singer, whose vocal flourishes sometimes reach my attic by snatches. When their windows are open, that of the workwoman shows me a humble but decent abode ; the other, a finely furnished room. But to-day a crowd of tradespeople throng there : they take down the silk hangings and carry off the furniture, and I now remember that the young singer passed under my window this morning with her veil down, walking with the hasty step of one who suffers some inward trouble. Ah, I guess it all ! Her means are exhausted in elegant fancies, or have been stolen away by some unexpected misfortune, and now she has

fallen from luxury to want. While the workwoman manages not only to keep her little room, but to furnish it with decent comfort by her steady toil, that of the singer has become the property of brokers. The one sparkled for a moment on the wave of prosperity; the other sails slowly but safely along the coast of humble industry.

Alas! is there not here a lesson for us all? Is it really in daring experiments, at the end of which we meet with wealth or ruin, that the wise man should employ his years of strength and freedom? Ought he to consider life as a regular employment which brings its daily wages, or as a game in which the future is determined by a few throws? Why take the risk of extreme chances? Why hasten to riches by perilous roads? Is it really certain that happiness is the prize of brilliant successes, rather than of a wisely accepted poverty? Ah, if men but knew in what a small dwelling joy can live, and how little it costs to furnish it!

Twelve o'clock. — I have been walking up and down my attic for a long time, with my arms folded and my eyes on the ground. My doubts increase, like shadows encroaching more and more on some bright space;

my fears multiply; the uncertainty becomes every moment more painful! I must decide before the evening! I hold my future in my hand, and I dare not question it.

Three o'clock. — The sky has become cloudy, and a cold wind begins to blow from the west; all the windows which were opened to the sunshine of a beautiful day are closed. Only, on the other side of the street, the lodger on the last story has not yet left his balcony.

One would know him to be a soldier by his measured tread, his gray mustaches, and the ribbon which decorates his buttonhole. Indeed, one might have guessed as much from the care he takes of the little garden, which is the ornament of his balcony in mid-air; for there are two things especially loved by old soldiers — flowers and children. They have been so long obliged to look upon the earth as a field of battle, so long cut off from the peaceful pleasures of a quiet lot, that they begin life at an age when others end it. The tastes of early years, arrested by the stern duties of war, suddenly break out again with their white hair, and are like the savings of youth, which they spend again in old age. Besides, having been condemned so long to

be destroyers, perhaps they feel a secret pleasure in creating, and seeing life spring up again ; agents of inflexible force, they are the more easily charmed by weakness, and watching over the frail germs of life has all the charm of novelty for these old workers of death.

So the cold wind has not driven my neighbor from his balcony. He is digging up the earth in his green boxes, and carefully sowing the seeds of the scarlet nasturtium, convolvulus, and sweet pea. Henceforth he will come every day to watch for their sprouting, to protect the young shoots from weeds or insects, to arrange the strings for the tendrils to climb by, and carefully to regulate their supply of water and heat.

How much labor to bring in the desired harvest ! How many times shall I see him brave cold or heat, wind or sun, as he does to-day ! But then, in the hot summer days, when the blinding dust whirls in clouds through our streets, when the eye, dazzled by the glare of white stucco, knows not where to rest, and the glowing roofs burn us by their heat, the old soldier will sit in his arbor and see nothing but green leaves and flowers around him, and the breeze will come cool

and fresh to him through these perfumed shades. His cares will be rewarded at last.

We must sow the seeds, and tend the growth, if we would enjoy the flower.

Four o'clock. — The clouds which have been gathering in the horizon for a long time have become darker; it thunders loudly, and the rain pours down! Those who are caught in the shower fly in every direction, some laughing and some crying.

I always find special amusement in this rush caused by a sudden storm. It seems as if each one, thus taken by surprise, loses the factitious character the world or habit has given him, and appears in his true colors.

See, for example, that big man with deliberate step who suddenly forgets his assumed indifference and runs like a school-boy! He is a thrifty citizen, who, with all his fashionable airs, is afraid of spoiling his hat.

That pretty lady yonder, on the contrary, whose looks are so modest, and whose dress is so carefully arranged, slackens her pace with the increasing storm. She seems to find pleasure in braving it, and does not think of her velvet cloak spotted by the hail! She is evidently a lioness in sheep's clothing.

Here a young man, who was passing, stops to catch some of the hailstones in his hand and examine them. By his quick and business-like walk, just now, you would have taken him for a tax-gatherer on his rounds, when he is really a young philosopher, studying the effects of electricity. And those school-boys who leave their ranks to run after the sudden gusts of the March whirlwind; those girls, just now so demure, who fly on with bursts of laughter; those national guards, who quit the martial attitude of their profession to take refuge under a porch! The storm has caused all these transformations.

See, it increases! The most impassive are forced to seek shelter. I see every one rushing toward the shop in front of my window, which a bill announces is to let. It is vacant for the fourth time within a few months. A year ago all the skill of the joiner and the art of the painter were employed in beautifying it, but their works are already destroyed by the loss of so many tenants; the cornices on the front are disfigured by mud; the arabesques on the doorway are spoiled by bills of sale posted there. With each new tenant the shop has lost some of its adornments.

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See it empty, and open to the passers-by !
How much does its fate resemble that of so
many who, like it, only change their occupa-
tion to rush the faster to ruin !

I am struck by this last reflection : since
the morning everything seems to speak to me,
and with the same warning tone. Everything
says : "Take care — be content with your
happy poverty ; happiness can only be re-
tained by constancy ; do not forsake your old
patrons to give yourself to those who are
unknown !"

Are they the outward objects which speak
thus, or does the warning come from within ?
Is it not I myself who give this language to
all that surrounds me ? The world is but an
instrument, to which we give sound at will.
But what matters it, if the lesson is a wise
one ? The low voice which speaks in our
breasts is always a friendly voice, for it tells
us what we are ; that is, what we can do.
Bad conduct results, for the most part, from
mistaking our calling. There are so many
fools and knaves, because there are so few
men who know themselves. The question is
not to discover what will suit us, but for what
we are suited !

What should I do in the midst of these

experienced financiers? A poor sparrow, born among the housetops, I should always fear the enemy lurking in a dark corner; a prudent workman, I should think of the luxury of my neighbor who so suddenly disappeared; a timid observer, I should call to mind the flowers so slowly raised by the old soldier, or the shop brought to ruin by constant change of masters. Away from me, ye feasts, over which hangs the sword of Damocles! I am a country mouse. Give me my nuts and a hollow tree and I ask only security besides.

And why this insatiable craving for riches? Does a man drink more when he drinks from a large glass? From whence comes that universal dread of mediocrity, the fruitful mother of peace and freedom? Ah, that is the evil which, above every other, it should be the aim of both public and private education to avert! If that were banished what treason would be spared, what baseness avoided, what a chain of excess and crime would be forever broken! We give the prize to charity, to self-sacrifice; but, above all, let us award it to moderation, for it is the great social virtue. Even when it does not create the others, it takes their place.

Six o'clock. — I have written a letter of

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thanks to the promoters of the new speculation, and have declined their offer! This decision has restored my peace of mind. I stopped singing, like the cobbler, as long as I entertained the hope of riches; it is gone, and happiness has returned!

O dear and gentle Poverty! pardon me for having for a moment wished to fly from thee, as I would fly from Want. Stay here forever with thy charming sisters, Pity, Patience, Sobriety, and Solitude; be my queens and my instructors; teach me the stern duties of life; remove far from me the weakness of heart, and giddiness of head, which follow prosperity. Holy Poverty! teach me to endure without complaining, to share without grudging, to make the end of life higher than pleasure, greater than power. You give the body strength, you make the mind more firm, and, thanks to you, this life, to which the rich attach themselves as to a rock, becomes a bark of which death may cut the cable without awakening our despair. Continue to sustain me, you whom Christ hath called *Blessed*.

CHAPTER IV.

LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

APRIL 9TH. — The fine evenings have come back ; the trees begin to put forth their shoots ; hyacinths, jonquils, violets, and lilacs perfume the baskets of the flower-girls ; all the world have begun their walks again on the quays and boulevards. After dinner I, too, descend from my attic to breathe the evening air.

It is the hour when Paris is seen in all its beauty. During the day the plaster fronts of the houses weary the eye by their monotonous whiteness ; heavily laden carts make the streets tremble under their huge wheels ; the eager crowd, taken up by the one fear of losing a moment from business, cross and jostle one another ; the aspect of the whole city has something harsh, restless, and breathless about it. But, as soon as the stars appear, everything is changed ; the white houses vanish into a misty distance ; you hear now only the rolling of carriages on their way to some party of pleasure ; you see only the loungeur or the light-hearted passing by ; work has given place to leisure. Now

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one breathes after the fierce race of the day's business, and whatever strength remains to him is given to pleasure! See the ball-rooms lighted up, the theatres open, the restaurants along the streets set out with dainties, and the twinkling lanterns of the newspaper criers. Decidedly, Paris has laid aside the pen, the ruler, and the apron; after the day spent in work it must have the evening for enjoyment; like the masters of Thebes, it has put off all serious matters till to-morrow.

I love to take part in this happy hour; not to mingle in the general gayety, but to contemplate it. If the joy of others embitters jealous minds it strengthens the humble spirit, like the ray of sunshine which opens the two beautiful flowers called *trust* and *hope*.

Alone in the midst of the smiling multitude, I do not feel myself isolated from it, for its gayety is reflected upon me; it is my own human family, who are enjoying life, and I take a brother's share in their happiness. Fellow-soldiers in this earthly battle, what does it matter to whom the honors of victory fall? If Fortune passes by without seeing us, and lavishes her favors on others, let us console ourselves, like the friend of Par-

menio, by saying, "Those, too, are Alexanders."

Pondering on these things, I was going on as chance took me. I crossed from one pavement to another, I retraced my steps, I stopped before the shops or to read the handbills. How many things there are to learn in the streets of Paris! What a museum it is! Unknown fruits, foreign arms, furniture of old times or other lands, animals of all climates, statues of great men, costumes of different nations! It is the world seen in samples!

Let us look at this people, whose knowledge is gained from the shop windows and the merchant's display of goods. Nothing has been taught them, but they have a rude notion of everything. They have seen pineapples at Chevet's, a palm tree in the Jardin des Plantes, sugar-cane for sale on the Pont-Neuf. The Redskins, exhibited in the Valentine Hall, have taught them to mimic the dance of the bison and to smoke the pipe of peace; they have fed Carter's lions; they know the principal national costumes contained in Babin's collection; Goupil's display of prints has placed the tiger-hunts of Africa and the sittings of the English Parliament

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before their eyes ; they have made acquaintance in the illustrated papers with Queen Victoria, the Emperor of Austria, and Kosuth. We can certainly instruct them, but not astonish them ; for nothing is completely new to them. You may take the Paris gamin through the five quarters of the world, and at every wonder with which you think to surprise him he will settle the matter with that favorite and conclusive word — *I know*.

But this variety of exhibitions, which makes Paris the fair of the world, does not merely offer a means of instruction to him who walks through it ; it is a continual spur for rousing the imagination, a first step of the ladder always set up before us in a vision. When we see them, how many journeys do we take in imagination, what adventures do we dream of, what pictures do we sketch ! I never look at that shop near the Chinese baths, festooned with jasmine from Florida, and filled with magnolias, without seeing the forest glades of the New World, described by the author of "Atala," opening out before me.

Then, when this study of things and communion with your own thoughts begin to tire you, look around you ! What contrasts of

forms and faces you see in the crowd! What a vast field for thought! A half-seen glance, or a few words caught on the wing, open a thousand vistas to your imagination. You try to find out what these imperfect disclosures mean, and, as the antiquary tries to decipher the mutilated inscription on some old monument, you build up a history on a gesture or a word! These are the stirring sports of the mind, which finds in fiction a relief from the wearisome dullness of the real.

Alas! as I was just passing by the carriage entrance of a great house I noticed a sad subject for one of these histories. A man was standing in the darkest corner with bare head, holding out his hat for the charity of passers-by. His threadbare coat had that look of neatness which shows that destitution had been met by a long struggle. Carefully buttoned, it hid the want of a shirt. His face was half hidden under his long gray hair, his eyes were closed, as if he wished to escape the sight of his own humiliation, and he remained mute and motionless. Those who passed him took no notice of this poverty enveloped in silence and shadow. Happy to escape complaints and importunities, they were glad to turn away their eyes.

All at once the great gate turned on its hinges; and a low carriage, lighted with silver lamps, and drawn by two black horses, came slowly out, and turned toward the Faubourg St. Germain. I could just distinguish, within, the sparkling diamonds and the flowers of a ball-dress; the glare of the lamps passed like a bloody streak over the pale face of the beggar, and showed his expression as his eyes opened and followed the rich man's equipage until it disappeared into the night.

I dropped a small piece of money into the hat he was holding out, and passed on quickly.

I had just surprised the two saddest secrets of the disease which troubles the age we live in—the envious hatred of those who suffer want and the selfish egotism of those who live in affluence.

All the enjoyment of my walk was gone; I ceased to look about me, and retired into my own heart. The animated and moving sight in the streets gave place to inward meditation upon all the painful problems which have been written for the last four thousand years under each human struggle, but which are propounded more clearly than ever in our days.

I pondered on the uselessness of so many

contests, in which defeat and victory displace each other in turn, and on the passionate misunderstandings which renew from generation to generation the bloody history of Cain and Abel; and saddened with these mournful reflections, I walked on as chance took me, until the silence all around insensibly drew me out of my own thoughts.

I had reached one of the lonely streets in which those who like to live in comfort without ostentation, and love serious reflection, delight to take shelter. There were no shops along the dimly lighted pavement; one heard only the sound of distant carriages and the steps of some of the inhabitants returning quietly home.

I instantly recognized the street, though I had only been there once before.

That was two years ago. I was walking at the time by the bank of the Seine. Its shores were plunged in shadow; and the lights on the quays and bridges gave it the aspect of a lake surrounded by a garland of stars; I had reached the Louvre, when I was stopped by a crowd collected near the parapet. They had gathered round a child of about six years old, who was crying, and I asked the cause of his tears.

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"It seems that he was sent to walk in the Tuileries," said a mason, who was returning from his work with his trowel in his hand; "the servant who took care of him met some friends there, and told the child to wait for him while he went to get a drink; but I suppose the drink made him more thirsty, for he has not come back, and the child cannot find his way home."

"Why do they not ask him his name, and where he lives?"

"They have been doing it for the last hour; but all he can say is, that he is called Charles, and that his father is M. Duval — there are twelve hundred Duvals in Paris."

"Then he does not know in what part of the town he lives?"

"I should think not, indeed! Don't you see that he is a gentleman's child? He has never gone out except in a carriage or with a servant; he does not know what to do by himself."

Here the mason was interrupted by some voices louder than the others.

"We cannot leave him in the street," said some.

"The child-stealers would carry him off," continued others.

"We must take him to the constable."

"Or to the police-office."

"That's the thing. Come, little one!"

But the child, frightened by these suggestions of danger, and at the names of police and constable, cried louder, and drew back toward the parapet. In vain they tried to persuade him; his fears made him resist the more, and the most interested began to get weary, when the voice of a little boy was heard through the confusion.

"I know him well," said he, looking at the lost child; "he belongs to our part of the town."

"What part is it?"

"Yonder, on the other side of the Boulevards, — Rue des Magasins."

"And you have seen him before?"

"Yes, yes! He belongs to the great house at the end of the street, where there is an iron gate with gilt points."

The child quickly raised his head and stopped crying. The little boy answered all the questions that were put to him, and gave such details as left no room for doubt. The bewildered child understood him, for he went up to him as if to put himself under his protection.

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"Then you can take him to his parents?" asked the mason, who had listened with real interest to the explanation.

"That will not be hard," answered the boy; "it's the way I'm going."

"Then you will take charge of him?"

"He has only to come with me."

And, taking up the basket he had put down on the pavement, he set off toward the postern gate of the Louvre.

The lost child followed him.

"I hope he will take good care of him," said I, when I saw them go away.

"Never fear," replied the mason; "the little one in the blouse is of the same age as the other; but, as the saying is, 'he knows black from white;' poverty, you see, is a famous schoolmistress!"

The crowd dispersed. For my part, I went toward the Louvre; the thought came to me to follow the two children, so as to guard against any mistake.

I was not long in overtaking them; they were walking side by side, talking, and already quite familiar with one another. The contrast in their dress then struck me. Little Duval wore one of those fanciful children's dresses which combine good taste and rich-

ness : his trousers came down in plaits from his waist to his boots of patent-leather, with mother-of-pearl buttons, and his curly hair was half-hidden by a velvet cap. The look of his guide, on the other hand, was that of extreme poverty, but as if belonging to those who resist and will not yield to it. His old blouse, patched with pieces of different shades, showed the perseverance of an industrious mother struggling against the wear and tear of time ; his trousers had become too short, and showed his stockings darned over and over again ; and it was evident that his shoes were not made for him.

The faces of the two children were not less different than their dresses. That of the first was delicate and refined ; his clear blue eye, his fair skin, and his smiling mouth gave him a charming look of innocence and happiness. The features of the other, on the contrary, had a certain roughness ; his eye was quick and lively, his complexion dark, his smile less merry than shrewd ; all showed a mind sharpened by too early experience ; he boldly walked through the middle of the streets thronged by carriages, and followed their countless turns without hesitation.

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I found, on asking him, that every day he carried dinner to his father, who was then working on the left bank of the Seine; and this duty had made him careful and prudent. He had learned those hard but forcible lessons which only necessity can teach. Unfortunately the wants of the household had kept him from school, and he seemed to regret it; for he often stopped before the print-shops, and asked his companion to read him the names of the engravings. In this way we reached the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, which the little wanderer seemed to recognize: in spite of his fatigue, he hurried on; he was moved by mixed feelings; at the sight of his home he uttered a cry, and ran toward the iron gate with the gilt points; a lady who was standing at the entrance received him in her arms, and from the exclamations of joy, and the sound of kisses, I saw that she was his mother.

Not seeing either the servant or child return she had sent in search of them in every direction, and was waiting for them in quivering anxiety.

I explained to her in a few words what had happened. She thanked me warmly, and looked around for the little boy who had

recognized and brought back her son; but while we were talking he had disappeared.

For the first time since then I had come into this part of Paris. Did the mother continue grateful? Had the children met again, and had the happy chance of their first meeting lowered between them that barrier which may mark the different classes, but should not divide them?

While asking myself these questions I slackened my pace, and fixed my eyes on the great gate, which I just saw. All at once it opened, and two children appeared at the entrance. Although much grown, I recognized them at first sight; they were the child who was found near the parapet of the Louvre, and his young guide. But the dress of the latter was greatly changed: his blouse of gray cloth was almost elegant, and was fastened round the waist by a polished leather belt; he wore strong shoes, but they were made for his feet, and he had on a new cloth cap.

When I saw him he held in his two hands an enormous bunch of lilacs, to which his companion was trying to add narcissus and primroses; the two children laughed, and parted with a friendly good-by. M. Duval's

son did not go in till he had seen the other turn the corner of the street.

Then I greeted the latter, and reminded him of our former meeting; he looked at me for a moment, and then seemed to remember me.

"Forgive me if I do not make you a bow," said he merrily, "but I want both my hands for the nosegay M. Charles has given me."

"You have, then, become great friends?" said I.

"Oh, I should think so," said the child; "and now my father is rich too!"

"How is that?"

"M. Duval lent him a little money; he has taken a shop, where he works on his own account; and, as for me, I go to school."

"Yes," replied I, noticing for the first time the cross which decorated his little coat; "and I see that you are head boy."

"M. Charles helps me to learn, and so I am at the head of the class."

"Have you just taken your lesson?"

"Yes, and he has given me some lilacs; for he has a garden where we play together, and where my mother can always have flowers."

"Then it is just as if it were partly your own?"

"So it is! Ah, they are good neighbors indeed! But here I am; good-by, sir."

The child nodded to me with a smile, and disappeared.

I went on with my walk, still pensive, but with a happier feeling. If I had elsewhere witnessed the painful contrast between wealth and want, here I had found the true union of riches and poverty. Hearty good-will had smoothed down the more rugged inequalities on both sides, and had opened a road of true neighborhood and fellowship between the humble workshop and the stately mansion. Instead of listening to the voice of interest they had both listened to that of self-sacrifice, and there was no place left for contempt or envy. Thus, instead of the beggar in rags, whom I had seen at the other door cursing the rich man, I had found here the happy child of the laborer loaded with flowers and blessing him! The problem so difficult and so dangerous to discuss on its merits I had just seen solved by love.

CHAPTER V.

COMPENSATION.

SUNDAY, MAY 27TH. — Capital cities have one thing peculiar to them: their days of rest seem to be the signal for a general dispersion. Like birds just restored to liberty, the people come out of their stone cages and joyfully fly toward the country. Who shall find a green hillock for a seat, or the shade of a wood for a shelter! They gather mayflowers; they run about the fields; the town is forgotten until the evening, when they return with sprigs of blooming hawthorn in their hats, and with their hearts gladdened by pleasant memories; the next day they again put on their harness.

These rural excursions are most remarkable at Paris. When the fine weather comes, clerks, shopkeepers, and workingmen look forward impatiently to the Sunday as the day for enjoying a few hours of this pastoral life; they walk through six miles of grocers' shops and public houses in the faubourgs, in the single hope of finding a real turnip field. The father of a family begins the practical education of his son by showing him wheat

which has not taken the form of a loaf, and cabbage "in its wild state." Heaven only knows the encounters, the discoveries, the adventures that are met with! What Parisian has not had his Odyssey in an excursion through the suburbs, and would not be able to write a companion to the famous "Travels by Land and by Sea from Paris to St. Cloud"?

We do not now speak of that floating population from every country, for whom our French Babylon is the caravansary of Europe, — a phalanx of thinkers, artists, men of business, and travellers, who, like Homer's hero, have reached their intellectual country after having seen "many peoples and cities," — but of the settled Parisian, who keeps his appointed place, and lives on his own floor like the oyster on his rock, a curious vestige of the credulity, the slowness, and the simplicity of bygone ages.

For one of the peculiarities of Paris is that it unites twenty populations completely different in character and manners. Besides the gypsies of commerce and art, who wander through all the several stages of fortune or fancy, lives a quiet race of householders, or of regular workers, whose existence resembles

the dial of a clock, on which the same hand points by turns to the same hour. If no other city shows more brilliant and stirring lives, no other contains more obscure and quiet ones. Great cities are like the sea; storms only agitate the surface; if you go to the bottom you find a region inaccessible to tumult and noise.

For my part, I have settled on the verge of this region, but do not actually live in it. I am removed from the turmoil of the world, in the shelter of my own solitude, but am not able to disconnect my thoughts from the struggle going on. I follow at a distance all its events of happiness or grief; I join the feasts and the funerals; for how can he who looks on, and knows what passes, refrain from taking part? Ignorance alone can estrange us from the life around us; selfishness, even, is not enough for that.

These reflections I made to myself in my attic, in the intervals of the various "household works" to which a bachelor is forced when he has no other servant than his own ready will. While pursuing my deductions, I had blacked my boots, brushed my coat, tied my cravat; I had at last arrived at the important moment when we say, like

God at the creation of the world, that "it is good."

A great resolve had just decided me to depart from my usual habits. The evening before, I had seen by the advertisements that the next day was a holiday at Sèvres, and that the china manufactory would be open to the public. I was tempted by the beauty of the morning, and suddenly decided to go there.

On my arrival at the station on the left bank I noticed the crowd hurrying on, afraid of being late. Railroads, besides many other advantages, will have that of teaching the French punctuality. They will submit to the clock when they are convinced that it is their master; they will learn to wait when they find they will not be waited for. Social virtues are, in a great degree, good habits. How many great qualities are grafted into nations by their geographical position, by political necessity, and by institutions! Avarice was destroyed for a time among the Lacedæmonians by the creation of an iron coinage, too heavy and too bulky to be conveniently hoarded.

I found myself in a carriage with two middle-aged sisters belonging to the retired and

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peaceful class of Parisians that I have spoken of above. A few civilities were sufficient to gain me their confidence, and after a few minutes I was acquainted with their whole history.

They were two poor women, left orphans at fifteen, who had lived ever since, as those who work for their livelihood must live, by economy and privation. For the last twenty or thirty years they had worked in jewelry in the same house; they had seen ten masters succeed one another, and grow rich, without any change in their own lot. They had always lived in the same room, at the end of one of the passages in the Rue St. Denis, where the air and the sun are unknown. They began their work before daylight, continued it till after nightfall, and saw the years succeed each other, and their lives were marked by no other event than the Sunday service, a walk, or an illness.

The younger of these worthy workwomen was forty, and obeyed her sister as when she was a child. The elder looked after her, took care of her, and scolded her with a mother's tenderness. At first it was amusing; afterward one could not help finding something

touching in these two gray-haired children, one unable to leave off the habit of obeying, the other that of protecting.

And it was not in that alone that my two companions seemed younger than their years; they knew so little that their wonder never ceased. We had hardly arrived at Clamart before they involuntarily exclaimed, like the king in the children's game, that *they did not think the world was so great!*

It was the first time they had trusted themselves to a railroad, and it was amusing to see their sudden shocks, their alarms, and their courageous determinations: everything was a marvel to them! They had remains of youth within them which made them sensible to things which usually strike us only in childhood. Poor creatures! having still the feelings of an earlier age though they had lost its charm.

But was there not something holy in this simplicity, which has preserved to them the freshness of youth? Ah, shame on him who first had the base courage to attach ridicule to that name of Old Maid, which recalls so many images of grievous deception, of deariness, and of abandonment! Shame on him who has made involuntary misfortune a

subject for sarcasm, and who crowns gray hair with thorns !

The two sisters were named Frances and Madeleine. This day's journey was a feat of unexampled courage. The fever of the times had infected them unawares. Yesterday Madeleine had suddenly proposed the idea of the expedition, and Frances had accepted it immediately. Perhaps it would have been better not to yield to the temptation offered by her young sister ; but " we have our follies at all ages," as the prudent Frances philosophically remarked. As for Madeleine, there are no regrets or doubts for her ; she is the life-guardsman of the establishment.

" We really must amuse ourselves," said she ; " we live but once."

And the elder sister smiled at this Epicurean maxim. It was evident that the fever of independence was at its crisis in both of them.

And in truth it would have been a great pity if any regret had interfered with their joy, it was so frank, so genial ! The sight of the trees, which seemed to fly on both sides of the road, caused them unceasing admiration. Meeting a train passing in the opposite direction, with the noise and rapidity of a

thunderbolt, made them shut their eyes and utter a cry ; but it had already disappeared ! They look around, take courage, and still wonder.

Madeleine declares that such a sight is worth the expense of the journey, and Frances would have agreed with her if she had not remembered, with some little alarm, the deficit which such an expense must make in their budget. The three francs spent upon this single expedition were the savings of a whole week of work. Thus the joy of the elder sister was tinged with remorse ; the prodigal child now and then turned her eyes toward the back street of St. Denis.

But the motion and the succession of objects distract her. Here is the bridge of the Val, surrounded by its lovely landscape ; on the right, Paris, with its grand monuments, which rise through the fog, or sparkle in the sunshine ; on the left, Meudon, with its villas, its woods, its vines, and its royal castle ! The two workwomen look from one window to the other with exclamations of delight. Our fellow-passengers laugh at their childish wonder ; but to me it is touching, for I see in it the sign of a long and monotonous seclusion ; they are the prisoners of work, who have

recovered liberty and fresh air for a few hours.

At last the train stops, and we leave it. I show the two sisters the path that leads to Sèvres, between the railway and the gardens, and they go on, while I inquire about the time of returning.

I soon join them again at the next station, where they have stopped at the little garden belonging to the gate-keeper; both are already in deep conversation with him while he digs his garden borders, and marks out the places for flower-seeds. He tells them that it is the time for hoeing out weeds, for making grafts and layers, for sowing annuals, and for destroying the insects on the rose trees. Madeleine has on the sill of her window two boxes, in which, for want of air and sun, she has never been able to make anything grow but water-cress; but she persuades herself that, thanks to this information, everything will henceforth thrive in them. At last the gate-keeper, who is sowing a border with mignonette, gives her the rest of the seeds, which he does not want, and the old maid goes off delighted, and reënacts the dream of Perette and her can of milk, with these flowers of her imagination.

On reaching the grove of acacias, where the fair was going on, I lost sight of the two sisters. I went through the shows alone: there were lotteries going on, mountebank shows, tilt-yards, and shooting with the cross-bow. I have always been struck by the spirit of these out-of-door festivals. In drawing-rooms people are cold, grave, often listless, and most of those who go there are brought together by habit or the obligations of society; in country assemblies, on the contrary, you only find those who are attracted by the hope of enjoyment. There, it is a forced conscription; here, they are all ready for gayety! Then, how easily they are pleased! How far this crowd of people is from realizing that to be pleased with nothing, and to look down on everything, is the height of fashion! Doubtless their amusements are often coarse; elegance and refinement are lacking in them; but at least they have sincerity. Ah, if these *fêtes* could keep their joyous vivacity with less vulgar feeling! Formerly religion stamped its holy character on these country festivals, and purified their pleasures without taking away their simplicity.

The hour has come when the doors of the porcelain manufactory and the museum of

pottery are open to the public. I meet Frances and Madeleine again in the first room. Frightened at finding themselves in the midst of such regal splendor, they hardly dare to move; they speak in a low tone, as if they were in a church.

"We are in the king's house!" said the elder sister, forgetting that there is no longer a king in France.

I encourage them to go on; I walk first, and they make up their minds to follow me.

What wonders are brought together in this collection! Here we see clay moulded into every shape, tinted with every color, and combined with every sort of substance!

Earth and wood are the first substances worked by man, and seem more especially meant for his use. They, like the domestic animals, are the essential accessories of his life; so there must be a more intimate connection between them and us. Stone and metals require long preparation; they resist our first efforts, and belong less to the individual than to the community. Earth and wood are, on the contrary, the first tools of the isolated being who must feed and shelter himself.

This, doubtless, makes me feel so much in-

terested in the collection I am examining. These cups, roughly modelled by the savage, admit me to a knowledge of some of his habits; these elegant yet incorrectly formed vases of the Indian tell me of a declining intelligence, in which still glimmers the twilight of what was once bright sunshine; these jars, loaded with arabesques, show the fancy of the Arab rudely and ignorantly copied by the Spaniard! We find here the stamp of every race, every country, and every age.

My companions seemed little interested in these historical associations; they looked at everything with that credulous admiration which neither examines nor criticises. Madeleine read the name written under every piece of workmanship, and her sister answered with an exclamation of wonder.

In this way we reached a little courtyard, into which had been thrown the fragments of some broken china. Frances noticed a colored and ornamented saucer, almost whole, of which she took possession as a remembrance of the visit she was making; henceforth she would have a specimen of the Sèvres china, *which is only made for kings!* I would not undeceive her by telling her that the products

of the manufactory are sold all over the world, and that her saucer, before it was cracked, was like those bought at the shops for sixpence! Why should I destroy the illusions of this humble life? Must we break off all the flowers from the hedges which sweeten the way? Things are often nothing in themselves; the thoughts we attach to them alone give them value. To rectify innocent mistakes, in order to recover some useless reality, is to be like the learned man who sees nothing in a plant but the chemical elements of which it is composed.

On leaving the manufactory the two sisters, who had taken possession of me with the freedom of artlessness, invited me to share the luncheon they had brought with them. I refused at first, but they insisted with so much good-nature that I feared to pain them, and yielded with some embarrassment.

We had only to look for a suitable place. I led them up the hill, and we found a plot of grass enamelled with daisies, and shaded by two walnut trees.

Madeleine could not contain herself for joy. All her life she had dreamed of a dinner on the grass! While helping her sister to take the provisions from the basket she tells

me of all her expeditions into the country that had been planned, and put off. Frances, on the contrary, was brought up at Montmorency, and before she became an orphan she had sometimes gone back to her nurse's house. That which had the attraction of novelty for her sister had for her the charm of recollection. She told about the vintage, to which her parents had taken her; the rides on Mother Luret's donkey, that could only be turned to the right by pulling him to the left; the cherry-gatherings; and the sails on the lake in the innkeeper's boat.

These recollections have all the charm and freshness of childhood. Frances recalls less what she has seen than what she has felt. While she is talking the cloth is laid, and we sit down under a tree. Before us winds the valley of Sèvres, its many-storied houses rising among gardens and up the slopes of the hill; on the other side stretches the park of St. Cloud, with its magnificent clumps of trees broken by meadows; above all is the sky like an immense ocean, where the clouds are sailing! I look at this beautiful country, and listen to these good old maids; I admire, I am interested; and time passes gently on without notice.

At last the sun sets, and we must think of returning. While Madeleine and Frances clear away the dinner I walk down to the manufactory to ask the time. The merry-making is at its height; the blasts of the trombones resound from the band under the acacias. For a few moments I forget myself; but I have promised the two sisters to take them back to the Bellevue station; the train cannot wait, and I make haste to climb the path again which leads to the walnut trees.

Just before I reached them I heard voices on the other side of the hedge. Madeleine and Frances were speaking to a poor girl whose clothes were burnt, her hands blackened, and her face tied up with blood-stained bandages. I saw that she was one of the girls employed at the gunpowder mills, which are built higher up on the heath. An explosion had taken place a few days before; the girl's mother and elder sister had been killed; she herself escaped by a miracle, and was now left without any means of support. She told all this with the resigned and hopeless manner of one who has always been used to suffering. The two sisters were much moved; I saw them consulting with

one another in a low tone; then Frances took thirty sous out of a little silk purse, which was all they had left, and gave them to the poor girl. I hastened on to the other side of the hedge; but, before I reached it, I met the two old sisters, who called out to me that they would not return by the railway, but on foot!

I then understood that the money they had meant for the journey had just been given to the beggar! Good, like evil, is contagious: I run to the poor, wounded girl, give her the sum that was to pay my own fare, and return to Frances and Madeleine, telling them that I will walk with them.

I have just come back from taking them home; and have left them delighted with their day, the remembrance of which will long make them happy.

This morning I was pitying those whose lives are obscure and joyless; now I understand that God has provided some compensation for every trial. Its rarity gives to the smallest joy a relish otherwise unknown. Enjoyment is only what we feel to be such and the luxurious man feels no longer; satiety has destroyed his appetite, while priva-

tion preserves to the other that first of earthly blessings, *the capacity for happiness*. Oh, that I could persuade every one of this, that so the rich might not abuse their riches, and that the poor might have patience! If happiness is the rarest of blessings it is because reception is the rarest of virtues.

Madeleine and Frances, you poor old women, deprived of all but courage, resignation, and kindness of heart, pray for the wretched who give themselves up to despair; for the unhappy who hate and envy; and for the unfeeling into whose enjoyments no pity enters!

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE MAURICE.

JUNE 7TH, FOUR O'CLOCK A.M. — I am not surprised at hearing, when I wake, the birds singing so joyfully outside my window; it is only by living, as they and as I do, in an attic that one knows how cheerful the mornings really are up among the roofs. It is there that the sun sends his first rays, and the breeze comes with the breath of gardens and woods; there that a wandering butterfly

sometimes ventures among the flowers of the roof, and that the songs of the industrious workwoman welcome the dawn of day. The lower stories are still deep in sleep, silence, and shadow, while here labor, light, and song already reign.

What life is around me ! See the swallow returning from her search for food, with her beak full of insects for her young ; the sparrows shake the dew from their wings, while they chase one another in the sunshine ; and my neighbors throw open their windows, and welcome the morning with their fresh faces ! Delightful hour of waking, when everything returns to feeling and to motion ; when the first light touches creation, and brings it to life again, as the magic wand touched the palace of the Sleeping Beauty in the wood ! It is a moment of rest from all misery : the sufferings of the sick are alleviated, and a breath of hope glides into despairing hearts. But, alas, it is only a respite ! Everything will soon resume its march ; the great human machine, with its long efforts, its low groans, and its crashes, will again begin to move.

The quiet of this first morning hour reminds me of that of our early years. Then,

too, the sun shines brightly; the air is fragrant; all the illusions of youth — those birds of our life's morning — sing around us. Why do they fly away when we are older? Whence come this sadness and solitude, which gradually steal upon us? The course seems to be the same with individuals and with communities: at first, so easily made happy, so naïvely enchanted; and at last dissolution and bitterness! The road, which began among hawthorns and primroses, ends speedily in deserts or in precipices! Why is there so much confidence at first, so much doubt at last? Is knowledge of life only destined to make it unfit for happiness? Must we condemn ourselves to ignorance if we would preserve hope? Is the world and is the individual man intended, after all, to find rest only in eternal childhood?

How many times have I asked myself these questions! Solitude has the advantage or the danger of making us continually search more deeply into the same ideas. As our questioning is only with ourselves, we always give the same direction to the conversation; we are not turned aside by the subject which occupies another mind or sways another's feeling; and so an involuntary inclination

makes us return forever to knock at the same doors !

I interrupted my reflections to put my attic in order. I hate a look of disorder, because it shows either contempt for details or inaptitude for the spiritual life. To arrange the things among which we have to live is to establish the relation of poverty and use between them and us ; it is to lay the foundation of those habits without which man tends to the savage state. What, indeed, is social organization but a series of habits, suited to our nature ?

I distrust both the intellect and the morality of those people to whom disorder is of no consequence — who can live at ease in an Augean stable. What surrounds us, reflects more or less what is within us. The mind is like one of those dark lanterns which, in spite of everything, still throw some light around. If our tastes did not reveal our character they would be no longer tastes, but instincts.

While I was arranging everything in my attic my eyes rested on the little almanac hanging over my chimney-piece. I looked for the day of the month, and I saw these words written in large letters : " FÊTE DIEU " !

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It is to-day! In this great city, where there are no longer any public religious solemnities, there is nothing to remind us of it; but it is, really, the period so happily chosen by the primitive Church. "The day kept in honor of the Creator," says Chateaubriand, "happens at a time when heaven and earth declare His power, when woods and fields are full of new life, and all are united by the happiest ties; there is not a single widowed plant in the fields."

What recollections these words have awakened! I left what I was doing, leaned my elbows on the window-sill, and, with my head between my two hands, I went back in thought to the little town where the first days of my childhood were passed.

The *Fête Dieu* was then one of the great events of my life! One must be diligent and obedient a long time beforehand, to deserve a share in it. I still recollect with what raptures of expectation I got up on the morning of the day. There was a holy joy in the air. The neighbors, awake earlier than usual, hung cloths with flowers or figures, worked in tapestry, along the streets. I went from one to another, by turns admiring religious scenes of the middle ages, mythological com-

positions of the Renaissance, old battles in the style of Louis XIV., and the pastoral scenes of Madame de Pompadour. All this world of phantoms seemed to come forth from the dust of past ages, to assist — silent and motionless — at the holy ceremony. I looked, alternately in fear and wonder, at those terrible warriors with their swords always raised, those beautiful huntresses shooting the arrow which never left the bow, and those shepherds in satin breeches always playing the flute at the feet of the ever-smiling shepherdesses. Sometimes, when the wind blew behind these hanging pictures, it seemed to me that the figures themselves moved, and I watched to see them detach themselves from the wall, and take their places in the procession! But these impressions were vague and fleeting. The feeling that predominated over every other was that of an overflowing yet quiet joy. In the midst of all the floating draperies, the scattered flowers, the voices of young girls, and the gladness which, like a perfume, exhaled from everything, you felt transported in spite of yourself. The sounds of the festival were repeated in your heart, in a thousand melodious echoes. You were more indulgent,

more devoted, more loving! For God was not only manifesting Himself without but also within us.

And then the altars for the occasion! the flowery arbors! the triumphal arches made of green boughs! What emulation among the different parishes for the erection of the resting-places¹ where the procession was to halt! It was for each one to contribute the rarest and the most beautiful of his possessions!

It was there that I made my first sacrifice!

The wreaths of flowers were arranged, the candles lighted, and the Tabernacle² dressed with roses; only one was lacking worthy to crown the whole! All the neighboring gardens had been ransacked. I alone possessed a flower worthy of such a place. It was blooming on the rose tree given me by my mother on my birthday. I had watched it for several months, and there was no other bud to open on the tree. There it was, half blown, in its mossy nest, the object of such long hope, and of child-like pride! I hesitated some moments. No one had asked me

¹ The *repositoires*, or temporary altars, on which the consecrated elements are placed while the procession halts.

² An ornamental case or cabinet which contains the bread and wine.

for it ; I might easily keep it. I should hear no reproaches except the one within my own heart. When every one else had given all, ought I alone to keep back my treasure? Ought I to grudge God one of the gifts which, like all the rest, I had received from Him? At this last thought I plucked the flower from its stem, and took it to crown the Tabernacle. Ah! why does the recollection of this sacrifice, which was so hard and yet so sweet to me, now make me smile? Is it so certain that the value of a gift is in itself, rather than in the intention? If the cup of cold water in the gospel is imputed to the poor man, why should not the flower be imputed to the child? Let us not look down upon the child's simple acts of generosity; these accustom the soul to self-denial and sympathy. I cherished this moss rose a long time as a sacred talisman; I had reason to cherish it always, as the record of the first victory won over myself.

It is now many years since I witnessed the celebration of the *Fête Dieu*; but should I again revive the happy sensations of former days? I still remember how, when the procession had passed, I walked through the streets strewn with flowers and shaded with

green boughs. Intoxicated by the lingering perfume of the incense, mingled with the fragrance of syringas, jessamines, and roses, I seemed no longer to touch the ground as I went along. I smiled at everything; the whole world was Paradise in my eyes, and it seemed to me that God was floating in the air!

Moreover, this feeling was not the excitement of the moment; more intense on certain days, at the same time it continued through the ordinary course of my life. Many years thus passed for me in an expansion of heart and a trustfulness which prevented sorrow, if not from coming, at least from staying with me. *Sure of not being alone*, I soon took heart again, like the child who recovers its courage, hearing its mother's voice close by. Why have I lost that confidence of my childhood? Shall I never again feel so deeply that *God is here*?

Strange association of ideas! A date recalls my infancy, and see! all the recollections of my former years blossom around me. Why was I so happy then? I consider, and nothing is sensibly changed in my condition. I possess, as I did then, health and daily bread; the only difference is that I am now responsible for myself! As a child I

accepted life as it was given to me ; another cared and provided for me. At peace with myself, if only I had performed present duties, I left the future to the foresight of my father ! My destiny was a ship, in the direction of which I had no share, and in which I sailed as a common passenger. There was the whole secret of my happy security. Since then worldly wisdom has deprived me of it. When my fate was in my own keeping I wished to make myself master of it by means of a long look into futurity. I have filled the present hour with anxieties for the future ; I have put my judgment in the place of Providence ; and the happy child is changed into the serious man.

A melancholy way, yet perhaps an important lesson ! Who knows but, if I had trusted more to Him who rules the world, I should not have been spared all this trouble ? It may be that happiness is only possible here below on the condition of living like a child, giving ourselves up to the duties of each day as it comes, and trusting in the goodness of our heavenly Father for all else.

This reminds me of my uncle Maurice ! Whenever I need to strengthen myself in all

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that is good I turn my thoughts toward him : I see again the gentle expression of his half-smiling, half-mournful face ; I hear his voice, always soft and soothing as a breath of summer ! The remembrance of him guards my life, and gives it light. He, too, was a saint and a martyr here below. Others have pointed out the paths to heaven ; he has taught us to see those of earth aright.

But except the angels, who are charged with recording sacrifices performed in secret, and virtues which are never known, who has ever heard of my uncle Maurice ? Perhaps I alone remember his name, and still recall his history.

Well ! I will write it, not for others, but for myself ! They say that, at sight of the Apollo, the body becomes erect, and assumes a more dignified attitude ; so, too, the soul should feel itself raised and ennobled at the remembrance of a beautiful life.

A ray of the rising sun lights up the little table on which I write ; the breeze brings me the odor of the mignonette ; and the swallows wheel about my window with joyful twitterings. The image of my uncle Maurice will be in its proper place amid the songs, the sunshine, and the fragrance.

Seven o'clock. — It is with men's lives as with days ; some dawn radiant with a thousand colors, others dark with gloomy clouds. That of my uncle Maurice was one of the latter. He was so sickly when he came into the world that they thought he would die ; but notwithstanding these anticipations, which might be called hopes, he lived on, suffering and deformed.

He was deprived of all joys as well as of all the attractions of childhood. Oppressed because he was weak, and laughed at for his deformity, in vain the little hunchback opened his arms to the world ; and the world scoffed at him and went its way.

Still, he had his mother, and it was to her that the child directed all the enthusiasm of a heart repulsed by others. Happy in this refuge, he reached the age when a man takes his place in life ; and Maurice had to content himself with that which others had disdained. His education would have fitted him for any career ; but he became an octroi-clerk¹ in one of the little toll-houses at the entrance of his native town.

He was always shut up in this dwelling of

¹ The *octroi* is the tax on provisions levied at the entrance of the towns.

a few feet square, with no relaxation from the office accounts but reading, and his mother's visits. On fine summer days she brought her work to the door of his cottage, under the shade of a clematis planted by Maurice. And, even when she was silent, her presence was a welcome diversion for the hunchback: he heard the clicking of her long knitting-needles; he saw her sweet, sad face, which reminded him of so many trials courageously borne; he could every now and then rest his hand affectionately on her bent shoulders, and exchange a smile with her!

This comfort was soon to be taken from him. His old mother fell sick, and at the end of a few days he had to give up all hope. Maurice, overcome at the idea of a separation which would henceforth leave him alone on earth, abandoned himself to boundless grief. On his knees, by his mother's bed, he called her by the tenderest names, he pressed her in his arms, as if he could thus keep her in life. His mother tried to return his caresses, and to answer him; but her hands were cold, her voice already gone. She could only press her lips to her son's forehead, breathe a sigh, and close her eyes forever!

They tried to take Maurice away, but he resisted them and threw himself on the motionless form.

"Dead!" cried he; "dead! She who never left me; the only one in the world who loved me! You, my mother, dead! What then remains for me here below?"

A stifled voice replied:

"God!"

Maurice drew back, startled! Was it a last sigh from the dead, or his own conscience, that answered him? He did not seek to know, but he understood the answer, and accepted it.

It was then that I first knew him. I often went to see him in his little toll-house. He joined in my childish games, told me his most beautiful stories, and let me gather his flowers. Deprived as he was of all external attractiveness, he showed himself full of kindness to all who came to him, and, though he never would put himself forward, he had a welcome for every one. Deserted, despised, he submitted to everything with patient sweetness; and while he was thus stretched on the cross of life, amid the insults of his executioners, he repeated with Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

No other clerk showed so much honesty, zeal, and intelligence; but those who might have valued him as his services deserved were repulsed by his deformity. As he had no patrons, his claims were always disregarded. They preferred before him those who were more agreeable, and seemed to be granting him a favor in letting him keep the humble office which supported him. Uncle Maurice bore injustice as he had borne contempt; misunderstood by men, he raised his eyes higher, trusting in the justice of Him who cannot be deceived.

He lived in an old house in a suburb, where many work-people, as poor but not as lonely as he, also lodged. One of these neighbors lived by herself in a little garret, into which came both wind and rain. She was a young girl, pale, silent, and with nothing to recommend her but her wretchedness and her resignation. She was never seen speaking to any other woman, and no song cheered her garret. Wrapped in a mournful depression, she worked without interest or rest. Her dejection touched Maurice; he tried to speak to her; she replied mildly, but in few words. It was easy to see that she preferred her silence and her solitude to the little hunch-

back's good-will; he understood it, and said no more.

But Toinette's needle hardly supported her, and presently work failed her! Maurice learned that the poor girl was in want of everything, and that the tradesmen refused to give her credit. He immediately went to them and secretly engaged to pay them for what they sold to Toinette.

Things went on so for several months. The young dressmaker continued without work, until she was at last frightened at the bills she owed the shopkeepers. When she came to an explanation with them everything was discovered. Her first impulse was to run to Uncle Maurice and thank him on her knees. Her habitual reserve had given way to a burst of deepest feeling. It seemed as if gratitude had melted all the ice of that frozen heart.

No longer embarrassed by a secret, the little hunchback could be kind more efficiently. Toinette became to him a sister, for whose wants he could provide. It was the first time since the death of his mother that he had been able to share his life with another. The young girl received his attentions with feeling, but with reserve. All Maurice's

efforts were insufficient to dispel her gloom : she seemed touched by his kindness, and sometimes warmly expressed her gratitude ; but there her confidences stopped. Her heart was a closed book, which the little hunchback might bend over but could not read. In truth he cared little to do so : he gave himself up to the happiness of being no longer alone, and took Toinette as her long trials had made her ; he loved her as she was, and wished only to enjoy her companionship.

This thought insensibly took possession of his mind, to the exclusion of all else. The poor girl was as lonely as himself ; she had become accustomed to the deformity of the hunchback, and seemed to look on him with affectionate sympathy ! What more could he wish for ? Until then, the hope of making himself acceptable to a helpmate had been repelled by Maurice as a dream ; but chance seemed willing to make it a reality. After much hesitation he took courage, and decided to speak to her.

It was evening ; the little hunchback, in much excitement, went to the workwoman's garret. Just as he was about to enter he thought he heard a strange voice speaking the maiden's name. He quickly pushed open

the door, and saw Toinette weeping, leaning on the shoulder of a young man in a sailor's dress.

At the sight of my uncle she disengaged herself quickly, and ran to him, crying out :

"Ah, come in — come in ! I thought he was dead : it is Julien ; it is my betrothed !"

Maurice tottered, and drew back. A single word had told him all !

It seemed to him as if the ground shook and his heart would break ; but the same voice that he had heard by his mother's death-bed again sounded in his ears, and he gathered himself together. God always remained to him !

himself accompanied the newly married pair when they went away, and, after wishing them all the happiness which was denied to him, he returned with resignation to the old house in the suburb.

It was there that he ended his life, forsaken by men, but not, as he said, by the *Father who is in Heaven*. He felt His presence everywhere ; it was to him in the place of all else. When he died it was with a smile, like an exile going back to his own country. He who had consoled him in poverty and weakness, when he was suffering

from injustice and isolation, had made death a gain and blessing to him.

Eight o'clock. — All that I have just written troubles me. Till now I have looked to life to teach me how to live. Is it then true that human maxims are not always adequate? that beyond goodness, prudence, moderation, humility, self-sacrifice itself, there is one great truth, which alone can face great misfortunes? and that, if man needs virtue for others, he needs religion for himself?

When, in youth, we drink our wine with a merry heart, as the Scripture expresses it, we think we are sufficient for ourselves; strong, happy, and beloved, we believe that like Ajax we can escape every storm *in spite of the gods*. But later in life, when the back is bowed, when happiness fades away, and love is chilled, — then, in fear of the emptiness and the darkness, we stretch out our arms, like the child surprised by the night, and call for help to *Him who is everywhere*.

I was asking this morning why all becomes confused, both for society and for the individual. In vain does human reason from time to time light some new torch on the roadside; the night grows ever darker! Is it not because we are content to withdraw

farther and farther from God, the Sun of the soul?

But what do these hermit's reveries signify to the world? The inward turmoils of most men are stifled by the outward ones; life does not give them time to question themselves. Have those time to know what they are, and what they should be, whose whole thoughts are of the next ball, or of the last price of stock? Heaven is very high, and prudent men look only to the earth.

But I — poor savage amid all this civilization, who seek neither power nor riches, and whose own life has taken shelter in the ideal — I can go back with impunity to these recollections of my childhood; and, if there is no *Fête Dieu* in our great city, I will try to keep one in my heart.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRICE OF POWER AND THE WORTH OF FAME.

SUNDAY, JULY 1st. — Yesterday the month dedicated to Juno (*Junius*, June) by the Romans closed. To-day we begin July.

In ancient Rome this latter month was called *Quintilis* (the fifth), because the year, which was then only divided into ten parts, began in March. When Numa Pompilius divided it into twelve months this name of *Quintilis* was preserved, as well as those that followed, — *Sextilis*, *September*, *October*, *November*, *December*, — although these names did not correspond with the newly arranged order of the months. After a time the month *Quintilis*, in which Julius Cæsar was born, was called *Julius*, from whence we have July. Thus this name, placed in the calendar, has become the imperishable record of a great man; it is an immortal epitaph on Time's highway, engraved by the admiration of man.

How many similar inscriptions there are! Seas, continents, mountains, stars, and monuments have all in succession served the same purpose! We have turned the whole world into a Golden Book, like that in which Venice used to enroll her illustrious names and great deeds. It seems as if the human race felt the need of honoring itself in its elect ones, and of raising itself in its own eyes by choosing heroes from among its own race. The human family love to preserve the memory of the "parvenus" of glory, as we cherish

that of a renowned ancestor or of a benefactor.

In truth, the talents granted to a single one do not benefit himself alone, but are gifts to all the world; every one shares them, for every one suffers or benefits by what he has done. Genius is a light-house, meant to give light far away; the man who possesses it is only the rock upon which this light-house is built.

I love to dwell upon these thoughts; they show me why we have such admiration for glory. When glory has helped the world, we are grateful for it; when it causes wonder, we simply feel proud of it. When glory has benefited men, that admiration is gratitude; when it is only remarkable in itself, it is the pride of race; we, men, love to immortalize the most shining examples of humanity.

Who knows whether we do not obey the same instinct in submitting to the powerful? Apart from the requirements of differences of rank, or the consequences of conquest, the multitude delight to surround their chief with privileges — whether it is that their vanity thus makes them aggrandize one of their own creations, or whether they try to conceal the humiliation of subjection by exaggerating the

importance of those who rule over them. They wish to honor themselves through their master; they raise him on their shoulders as on a pedestal; they surround him with a halo of light, that some of it may be reflected upon themselves. It is still the fable of the dog who accepts the chain and the collar, if only they are of gold. This vanity of servitude is no less natural or less common than the vanity of dominion. Whoever feels himself incapable of command, at least desires to obey a powerful chief. Serfs have been known to consider themselves dishonored when they became the property of a mere count after having been that of a prince, and Saint-Simon tells us of a valet who would only wait upon marquises.

July 7th, seven o'clock P.M. — I have just now walked up the Boulevards; it was the opera night, and there was a crowd of carriages in the Rue Le Pelletier. The foot-passengers who were stopped at a crossing recognized some of the occupants as they went by, and mentioned their names; they were those of celebrated or powerful men, the successful ones of the day.

Near me there was a man looking on with hollow cheeks and eager eyes, wearing a

thread-bare black coat. He followed with envious looks these possessors of power or fame, and I read on his lips, which curled with a bitter smile, all that was passing in his mind.

"Look at them, the lucky fellows!" thought he; "all the pleasures of wealth, all the enjoyments of pride, are theirs. The crowd know their names; all their wishes are fulfilled; they are the sovereigns of the world either by their intellect or their power; and while I, poor and unknown, toil painfully along the road below, they stand upon the mountain tops gilded by the broad sunshine of prosperity."

I came home in deep thought. Is it true that there are these inequalities, I do not say in the fortunes, but in the happiness of men? Do genius and authority really wear life as a crown, while the greater part of mankind receive it as a yoke? Is the difference of rank but a different use of men's dispositions and talent or a real inequality in their destiny? A solemn question, as it is concerned with vindicating God's impartiality!

July 8th, noon. — I went this morning to call upon a friend from my own province, who is first gentleman usher to one of our ministers. I took him some letters from

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his family, brought by a traveller just from Brittany. He wished me to stay.

"To-day," said he, "the minister gives no audience: he takes a day of rest with his family. His young sisters have arrived; he will take them this morning to St. Cloud, and in the evening he has invited his friends to a private ball. I shall be dismissed directly for the rest of the day. We can dine together; read the news while you are waiting for me."

I sat down at a table covered with newspapers, which I looked over in turn. Most of them contained severe criticisms on the last political acts of the minister; some of them added withering suspicions of the minister's own honor.

Just as I had finished reading, a secretary came to take them to his master.

He was then to read these accusations, to suffer silently the abuse of all those tongues which were holding him up to indignation or to scorn! Like the Roman victor in his triumph, he must endure the insults of him who followed his chariot rehearsing to the crowd his follies, his ignorance, or his vices.

But, among the arrows shot at him from every side, would none be found poisoned?

Would not one pierce some vital spot? What is the worth of a life exposed to the attacks of envious hatred or passionate conviction? The Christians yielded only strips of flesh to the beasts of the amphitheatres; the man in power gives up his peace, his affections, his honor, to the cruel stings of the pen.

While I was musing upon these dangers of greatness the usher entered hastily. Important news had been received: the minister has been summoned to the council; he cannot take his sisters to St. Cloud.

I saw, through the window, the young girls, who were waiting at the door, sorrowfully go upstairs again, while their brother went off to the council. The carriage, which should have carried so much family happiness, is just out of sight, carrying in it only the cares of a statesman.

The usher came back discontented and disappointed.

Whether he can enjoy much liberty or little, that is his barometer of the political atmosphere. If he gets leave, all goes well; if he is kept at his post, the country is in danger. His opinion on public affairs is but the measure of his own interest. My friend is almost a statesman.

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We talked together, and he told me some curious details of public life.

The new minister has old friends whose opinions he opposes, while retaining his personal regard for them. Though separated from them by the colors under which he fights, they are united by old associations; but the exigencies of party forbid them to meet. Continued intercourse would awaken suspicion; some dishonorable bargain would be suspected; his friends would be regarded as traitors ready to sell themselves, and he as the corrupt minister willing to buy them. He has, therefore, been obliged to renounce friendships of twenty years' standing, and to sacrifice attachments which had become second nature.

Sometimes, however, the minister still yields to his old feelings; he receives or visits his friends privately; he shuts himself up with them, and talks of the times when they could be openly friendly. By dint of precautions, they have hitherto succeeded in concealing this plot of friendship against policy; but sooner or later the newspapers will be warned, and will hold him up to the country as an object of distrust.

For whether hatred is honest or dishonest,

it never shrinks from any accusation. Sometimes it even stoops to crime. The usher assured me that warnings had been given the minister which had made him fear an assassin, and that he no longer ventured out on foot.

Then, one confidence leading to another, I learned what temptations came to mislead or overcome his judgment; how he found himself drawn into evil deeds which he could only deplore. Misled by passion, over-persuaded by entreaties, or forced for reputation's sake, he has many times let the balance waver! Sad condition of one in authority! for not only are the evils of power imposed upon him, but its vices also, and these, not content with torturing him, at last succeed in corrupting him.

We prolonged our conversation till it was interrupted by the minister's return. He sprang out of the carriage with a handful of papers, and with an anxious look went into his own room. A moment later his bell rang; he called his secretary to send off notices to all those invited for the evening; the ball would not take place; they spoke mysteriously of bad news brought by telegraph, and in such circumstances an entertainment would seem to insult the public sorrow.

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I took leave of my friend and came home. What I have just seen answers my questions of the other day. Now I know with what pangs men pay for their dignities; I now understand

“How Fortune sells what we believe she gives.”

This explains to me why Charles V. longed for the quiet of the cloister.

And yet I have only glanced at a few of the sufferings attached to power. What shall I say of the great humiliations which plunge its possessors from the heights of heaven to the very depths of hell? of that path of pain along which they must forever bear the burden of their responsibility as Christ bore the cross? of that chain of decorum and *ennui* which binds every act of their lives, and leaves them so little liberty?

The partisans of despotism have defended with reason forms and ceremonies. If men wish to give unlimited power to their fellow-men they must keep them separate from humanity; they must surround them with perpetual homage, and, by a constant ceremonial, preserve the superhuman rôle they have granted them. Masters can only remain absolute by being treated as idols.

But, after all, these idols are men, and if

the exceptional life they must lead is an insult to the dignity of others it is also a torment to themselves. Every one knows the law of the Spanish court, which used to regulate, hour by hour, the actions of the king and queen; "so that," said Voltaire, "by reading it one can tell all that the sovereigns of Spain have done, or will do, from Philip II. to the day of judgment." This it was which compelled Philip III., when ill, to endure such an excess of heat that he died in consequence, because the Duke of Uzeda, who alone had the right to put out the fire in the royal chamber, was absent.

When the wife of Charles II. was run away with by a spirited horse she would have perished, since no one dared to save her, because etiquette forbade them to *touch the queen*. Two young officers endangered their lives by stopping her horse, but the prayers and tears of her whom they had just snatched from death were needed to obtain pardon for their *crime*. Every one knows the story told by Madame Campan of Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis XVI. One day, at her toilet, when the chemise was about to be given her by one of the assistants, a lady of very ancient family entered and claimed the honor, as eti-

quette gave her the right; but, at the moment when she was going to fulfil her duty, a lady of higher rank appeared, and in her turn took the garment she was offering to the queen; when a third lady of still higher title came in her turn, and was followed by a fourth, who was no other than the king's sister. The chemise was in this way passed from hand to hand, with much reverence and many compliments, before it came to the queen, who, half naked and quite ashamed, was shivering with cold for the sake of etiquette.

12th, seven o'clock P.M. — On coming home, this evening, I saw, standing on the threshold of a house, an old man, whose bearing and look reminded me of my father. There was the same beautiful smile, the same deep and penetrating eye, the same noble bearing, and the same careless attitude.

I began to live over again the first years of my life, and to recall to myself the words of that guide whom God in His mercy had given me, and whom in His severity He had too soon withdrawn.

When my father spoke it was not only to relate our two minds by an interchange of thought, but his words always contained instruction.

Not that he tried to make me feel it so; my father feared everything that had the appearance of a lesson. He used to say that virtue could make herself devoted friends, but she took no pupils: so he was not anxious to teach goodness; he contented himself with sowing its seeds, sure that experience would make them grow

How often has good grain thus dropped into a corner of the heart, and, when it has been long forgotten, it has all at once put forth the blade and the ear! It is a treasure laid aside in a time of ignorance, and we only realize its value when we feel its need.

Among the stories with which he enlivened our walks or our evenings there is one which now comes back to my memory, doubtless because its lesson is now needed.

My father, who was apprenticed at the age of twelve to one of those trading collectors who call themselves *naturalists*, because they put all creation under glass to sell it at retail, had always led a life of poverty and labor. Rising before daybreak, by turns shop-boy, clerk, and workman, he was made to bear alone the work of a trade whose profits his master reaped. In truth, this latter had a peculiar talent for making use of the labor of

others. Though unfit himself for any kind of work, no one knew better how to sell that of others. His words were a net, in which people found themselves taken before they knew it. And since he was a friend to himself alone, and looked on the producer as his enemy and the buyer as his prey, he used them both with that obstinate perseverance which avarice teaches.

My father was a slave all the week, and could only call himself his own on Sunday. The master naturalist, who used to spend the day with an old cousin, then gave him his liberty on condition that he dined out, and at his own expense. But my father used secretly to take with him a crust of bread, which he hid in his botanizing box, and leaving Paris at daybreak, he would wander far into the valley of Montmorency, the wood of Meudon, or among the windings of the Marne. Excited by the fresh air, the penetrating odor of growing things, or the fragrance of the honeysuckles, he walked on until hunger or fatigue made him stop. Then he would sit under a hedge, or by the side of a stream; and water-cresses, wood strawberries, and blackberries, picked from the hedges, made a feast for him; he would gather a few plants,

read a few pages of Florian, then in great vogue, of Gessner, who had just been translated, or of Jean Jacques, of whom he possessed three odd volumes. The day passed alternately in activity and rest, in research and meditation, until the setting sun warned him to go back to Paris, which he reached with feet bruised and dusty, but with his heart refreshed and his mind invigorated for the whole week.

One day, as he was going toward the wood of Viroflay, he met, close to it, a stranger who was occupied in botanizing and in sorting the plants he had gathered. He was an oldish man with an honest face; but his eyes, which were rather deep set under his eyebrows, had a somewhat uneasy and timid expression. He was dressed in a brown cloth coat, a gray waistcoat, black breeches, and worsted stockings, and held an ivory-headed cane under his arm. His appearance was that of a small retired tradesman who was living on his means, and rather below the golden mean of Horace.

My father, who had great respect for age, politely spoke to him in passing; as he did so a plant he held fell from his hand; the stranger stooped to pick it up, and recognized it.

"It is a *Deutaria heptaphyllos*," said he;

"I have not yet seen any of them in these woods; did you find it near here, sir?"

My father replied that it was to be found in abundance on the top of the hill, towards Sèvres, as well as the great *Laserpitium*.

"That, too?" repeated the old man more briskly. "Ah! I shall go and look for them; I used to gather them on the hillside of Robaila."

My father offered to take him to the place. The stranger thanked him gratefully and hastened to collect the plants he had gathered; but all of a sudden he seemed to be seized with a scruple. He observed to his companion that the road he was to take was half-way up the hill, and led towards the castle of the Dames Royales at Bellevue; that by going to the top he would consequently go out of his way; and that it was not right for him to take this trouble for a stranger.

My father insisted with his usual good-nature; but, the more eagerness he showed, the more obstinately the old man refused; it even seemed to my father that his good intention at last excited his suspicion. Having contented himself with pointing out the road to the stranger, he saluted him, and soon lost sight of him.

Several hours passed by, and he thought no more of the meeting. He had reached the copses of Chaville, where, stretched on the ground in a mossy glade, he was reading once more the last volume of "Emile." The delight of the reading had so completely absorbed him that he no longer saw or heard anything around him. With flushed cheeks and moist eyes he repeated aloud a passage which had particularly affected him.

An exclamation uttered close by him waked him from his ecstasy; he raised his head, and saw the ordinary-looking man he had met before on the cross-road at Viroflay.

He was loaded with plants, and their gathering seemed to have put him into high good humor.

"A thousand thanks, sir," said he to my father. "I have found all that you told me of, and I am indebted to you for a charming walk."

My father respectfully rose, and made a civil reply. The stranger had grown quite familiar, and even asked if his young *brother botanist* did not think of returning to Paris. My father said yes, and opened his tin box to put back his book.

The stranger asked him with a smile if he

might without impertinence ask its name. My father answered that it was Rousseau's "Emile."

The stranger immediately became grave.

They walked for some time side by side, my father expressing, with the warmth of a heart still throbbing with emotion, all that this work had made him feel; his companion always cold and silent. The former extolled the glory of the great Genevese writer, whose genius had made him a citizen of the world; he expatiated on this privilege of great thinkers, who reign in spite of time and space, and gather together a group of willing subjects from all nations; but the stranger suddenly interrupted him:

"And how do you know," said he gently, "whether Jean Jacques would not exchange the reputation which you seem to envy for the life of one of the woodcutters, the smoke of whose chimney we see? What has fame brought him but persecution? The unknown friends whom his books may have made for him content themselves with blessing him in their hearts, while the declared enemies that they have drawn upon him pursue him with violence and calumny! His pride has been flattered by success; how many times has it

been wounded by satire ! And be sure that human pride is like the Sybarite, who could not sleep because of a crumpled rose leaf. The activity of a vigorous mind, by which the world profits, almost always turns against him who possesses it. He demands more of life as he grows older. The ideal he pursues disenchants him with the real ; he is like a man who, with too refined sight, sees spots and blemishes in the most beautiful face. I do not speak of stronger temptations and of deeper pitfalls. Genius, you have said, is a kingdom ; but what good man is not afraid to be a king ? He who feels only great power, is — with the weakness and passion of our nature — preparing for great failure. Believe me, sir, and do not admire or envy the man who wrote this book, but if you have a feeling heart, pity him ! ”

My father, astonished at the excitement with which his companion had said these last words, did not know what to answer.

Just then they reached the paved road which led from Meudon castle and the Dames de France to Versailles ; a carriage was passing.

The ladies who were in it noticed the old man, uttered a cry of surprise, and leaning out of the window exclaimed :

"It is Jean Jacques ; it is Rousseau !"

Then the carriage disappeared in the distance.

My father was motionless, stupefied and bewildered, his eyes wide open and his hands clasped.

Rousseau, who trembled at hearing his name spoken, turned toward him.

"You see," said he, with the bitter misanthropy which his later misfortunes had produced in him, "Jean Jacques cannot even hide himself ; he is an object of curiosity to some, of malignity to others, and to all he is a chattel at which they point the finger. It would signify less if he had only to submit to the impertinence of the idle ; but as soon as a man has the misfortune to make himself a name he is common property. Every one crowds into his life, tells his most trivial actions, and insults his feelings ; he becomes like those walls, which every passer-by may deface with some abusive writing. Perhaps you will say that I have encouraged this curiosity by publishing my own 'Memoirs.' But the world forced me to it. They looked through my blinds, and they slandered me ; I have opened the doors and windows, so that they should at least know me as I am. Adieu,

sir. Whenever you wish to know the worth of fame, remember that you have seen Rousseau."

Nine o'clock. — Ah, now I understand my father's story! It contains the answer to one of the questions I asked myself a week ago. Yes, I now see that fame and power are gifts dearly bought; and that, when they dazzle the soul, both of them are oftenest, as Madame de Staël says, but "sorrow only touched with happiness!"¹

CHAPTER VIII.

MISANTHROPY AND REPENTANCE.

AUGUST 3D, NINE O'CLOCK P.M. — There are days when everything seems gloomy to us; the world is, like the sky, hidden in a dismal fog. Nothing seems in its place; we only see misery, improvidence, and cruelty; the world seems to be without God, given up to all the evils of chance.

Yesterday I was in this sad mood. After

¹ ['T is better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.

Henry VIII., Act II., Scene 3.]

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a long walk in the faubourgs I came home, gloomy and discouraged.

Everything I had seen seemed to accuse the civilization of which we are so proud! I had wandered into a little by street, of which I was ignorant, and I found myself suddenly among those frightful houses where the poor are born, languish, and die. I looked at those decaying walls, which time has covered with a foul leprosy; those windows, from which dirty rags hang out to dry; those foul gutters, which wind along the fronts of the houses like venomous reptiles! My heart was oppressed and I hurried on.

A little farther on I was stopped by the hearse from a hospital; a dead man, nailed down in his deal coffin, was going to his last abode, without funeral pomp or ceremony, and without followers. There was not here even that last friend of the outcast—the dog, which a painter has depicted as the sole attendant at the pauper's burial! He whom they were burying was going to his grave alone, as he had lived; doubtless no one would notice his end. In this great battle of society what matters one soldier the less?

But what, then, is this human society, if

one of its members can thus disappear like a leaf carried away by the wind?

The hospital was near some barracks, at the entrance of which old men, women, and children were quarrelling for the remains of the black bread which the soldiers had given them in charity! Thus beings like ourselves daily wait till our pity gives them leave to live! Whole troops of outcasts, in addition to the trials imposed on all God's children, have to endure the pangs of cold, hunger, and humiliation. Sad commonwealths, where man is in a worse condition than the bee in its hive, or the ant in its subterranean city!

Ah! what then avails our reason? Of what use are so many high faculties, if we are neither the wiser nor the happier for them? Who would not exchange his life of labor and trouble for that of the birds of the air, to whom the whole world is a festival?

How well I understand the complaint of Mao, in the popular tales of the "Foyer Breton," who, when dying of hunger and thirst, says, as he looks at the bullfinches rifling the fruit trees:

"Alas! those birds are happier than Chris-

tians ; they have no need of inn or butcher, of baker or gardener. God's heaven belongs to them, and earth spreads a continual feast before them ! The tiny flies are their game, ripe grass is their corn-field, and hips and haws are their store of fruit. They have the right of taking everywhere, without paying or asking leave : so the little birds are happy, and sing the livelong day ! ”

But the life of man in a natural state is like that of the birds ; he equally enjoys nature. “ The earth spreads a continual feast before him.” What, then, has he gained by that selfish and imperfect association which forms a nation ? Would it not be better for every one to return again to the fertile bosom of Nature, and there live upon her bounty in peace and liberty ?

August 10th, four o'clock A.M. — The dawn reddens the curtains of my bed ; the breeze brings me the fragrance of the gardens below. Here I am again leaning on my window-sill, breathing in the freshness and gladness of this new day.

My eye always wanders over the roofs filled with flowers, birds, and sunlight with the same pleasure ; but to-day it stops at the end of a buttress which separates our house from

the next. The storms have stripped off the top of its plaster covering, the dust carried by the wind has collected in the crevices, and, fixed there by the rain, has formed a sort of aerial terrace, where some grass has grown. A stalk of wheat has sprung up there which to-day is surmounted by a sickly ear that droops its yellow head.

This poor harvest of the roofs, which will feed the neighboring sparrows, has carried my thoughts to the rich crops which are now falling under the sickle; it has recalled to me the beautiful walks I took as a child through my native province, when the threshing-floors at the farmhouses resounded everywhere with the sound of the flail, and when the carts, loaded with golden sheaves, came in from every direction. I still remember the songs of the young girls, the cheerfulness of the old men, the open-hearted merriment of the laborers. There was something in their look both of pride and tenderness. One came from gratitude to God, the other from the sight of the harvest, the reward of their labor. They felt dimly the grandeur and the holiness of their part in the work of the world; they looked with pride upon their mountains of corn

sheaves, and they seemed to say, Next to God, it is we who feed the world!

What wonderful order in all human activity! While the husbandman ploughs his land, and prepares for every one his daily bread, the artisan, far away in the town, weaves the stuff for him to wear; the miner seeks under ground the iron for his plough; the soldier defends him against the invader; the judge takes care that the law protects his fields; the tax-comptroller adjusts his private interests to those of the public; the merchant exchanges his products with those of distant countries; the scientist and the artist add every day some steed to this ideal team which draws the material world, as steam impels the gigantic trains of our railroads! Thus all unite together, all help one another; the toil of each one helps both himself and the whole world; the work has been apportioned among the different members of society by a tacit agreement. If, in this apportionment, errors are committed, if certain individuals have not been employed up to their capacity, these defects of detail vanish in the sublime conception of the whole. The poorest man included in this association has his place, his work, his rea-

son for being there; each is something in the whole.

There is nothing like this for man in the state of nature. Caring only for himself, he must be sufficient for everything. All creation is his property; but he finds in it as many hindrances as helps. He must surmount these obstacles with the single strength that God has given him; he can reckon on no other aid but chance and opportunity. No one reaps, manufactures, fights, or thinks for him; he is nothing to any one. He is a unit multiplied by the cipher of his own single powers; while the civilized man is a unit multiplied by the forces of the entire world.

Yet only the other day, saddened by the sight of certain vices in detail, I cursed the latter, and almost envied the lot of the savage.

One of the infirmities of our nature is always to mistake feeling for evidence, and to judge of the season by a cloud or a ray of sunshine.

Was the misery, the sight of which made me long for a savage life, really the effect of civilization? Must we accuse society of having created these evils, or acknowledge,

on the contrary, that it has alleviated them? Could the women and children who were receiving the coarse bread from the soldier hope, in a desert, for more help or pity? That dead man, whose loneliness I deplored, had he not found the care of a hospital, a coffin, and the humble grave where he was to rest? Alone, and far from men, he would have died like a wild beast in his den, and would now be serving as food for vultures! These benefits of human society are shared, then, by the most destitute. Whoever eats the bread that another has harvested and kneaded is under an obligation to his brother, and cannot say he owes him nothing in return. The poorest of us has received from society much more than his own single strength would have wrested from nature.

But cannot society give us more? Who doubts it? Errors have been committed in this distribution of tasks and workers. Time will diminish their number; with new light a better division will arise; the elements of society will go on toward perfection, like everything else. The difficulty is to know how to adapt ourselves to the slow step of time, whose progress can never be forced without danger.

August 14th, six o'clock A.M. — My garret window rises from the roof like a massive watch-tower. The corners are covered by great sheets of lead, which run under the tiles; the successive action of cold and heat has started them, and so a crevice has been formed in an angle on the right. There a sparrow has built her nest.

I have followed the progress of this airy dwelling from the first day. I have seen the bird successively bring the straw, moss, and wool for her house, and I have admired the persevering skill used in this difficult work. At first my new neighbor spent her days in fluttering over the poplar in the garden, and in chirping along the gutters; a fine lady's life seemed the only one which suited her. Then, all of a sudden, the necessity of preparing a shelter for her brood transformed our idler into a worker; she no longer gave herself either rest or relaxation. I saw her always flying, fetching, or carrying; neither rain nor sun stopped her. An eloquent example of the power of necessity; to which we not only owe most of our talents, but many of our virtues!

Is it not necessity which has given the people of less favored climates that eager

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activity which has placed them so quickly at the head of the nations? Deprived of most of the gifts of nature, they have supplied them by their industry; necessity has sharpened their understanding, and endurance has awakened their foresight. While elsewhere man, warmed by an ever-brilliant sun, and loaded with the bounties of the earth, remained poor, ignorant, and naked in the midst of unexplored gifts, here he was forced by necessity to wrest his food from the ground, to build habitations to defend himself from the inclemency of the weather, and to keep himself warm with the wool of animals. Work makes him both more intelligent and more robust; disciplined by it, he seems to mount higher in the scale of being, while those more favored by nature remain nearest to the brutes.

I made these reflections while looking at the bird, whose instinct seemed to have become more acute since she had given herself up to work. At last the nest was finished; she had set up housekeeping, and I followed her through all the phases of her new existence.

When she had sat on the eggs, and the young ones were hatched, she fed them with the most attentive care. The corner of my window had become a theatre of moral action,

where fathers and mothers might come to take a lesson. The little ones grew quickly, and this morning I have seen them take their first flight. One of them, weaker than the others, could not clear the edge of the roof, and fell into the gutter. I caught him with some difficulty, and placed him again on the tile in front of his house, but the mother took no notice of him. Freed from family cares, she has resumed her aimless, adventurous life among the trees and along the roofs. In vain I have kept away from my window, to take from her every excuse for fear; in vain the feeble little bird has called her with plaintive cries; his naughty mother has passed by singing and fluttering with a thousand airs and graces. Once only the father came near; he looked at his offspring with disdain, and then disappeared, never to return!

I crumbled some bread before the little orphan, but he did not know how to peck it. I tried to catch him, but he flew into the forsaken nest. What will become of him there, if his mother does not come back?

August 15th, six o'clock. — This morning, on opening my window, I found the little bird dying upon the tiles; his wounds showed me that he had been driven from the nest by his

heartless mother. I tried in vain to warm him again with my breath; I felt his last flutterings; his eyes were already closed, and his wings hung limp! I placed him on the roof in a ray of sunshine, and closed my window. The struggle of life against death has always something gloomy in it: it is like a warning.

Happily I hear some one in the passage; perhaps it is my old neighbor; his conversation will distract my thoughts.

It was my portress. Excellent woman! She wished me to read a letter from her son the sailor, and begged me to answer it for her.

I kept it, to copy it into my journal. Here it is:

DEAR MOTHER: This is to tell you that I have been very well ever since the last time, except that last week I was nearly drowned with the boat, which would have been a great loss, as there is not a better craft anywhere.

A gust of wind capsized us; and just as I came up above water I saw the captain sinking. I went after him, as was my duty, and, after diving three times, I brought him to the surface, which pleased him very much; for when we were hoisted on board, and he had recovered his senses, he

threw his arms round my neck, just as he would have done to an officer.

‘ I do not hide from you, dear mother, that this has delighted me. But this is n’t all ; it seems that fishing up the captain has reminded them that I had a good character, and they have just told me that I am promoted to be a sailor of the first class ! As soon as I knew it I cried out, “ My mother shall have coffee twice a day ! ” And really, dear mother, there is nothing to hinder you, as I shall now have a larger allowance to send you.

I conclude by begging you to take good care of yourself if you wish to please me ; for the idea that you want for nothing makes me feel very happy.

Your son, from the bottom of my heart,

JACQUES.

This is the answer that the portress dictated to me :

MY GOOD JACQUOT : It is a great pleasure to me to see that your heart is still as true as ever, and that you will never shame those who have brought you up. I need not tell you to take care of your life, because you know it is like my own, and that without you, dear child, I should wish for nothing but the grave ; but we are not bound to live, while we *are* bound to do our duty.

Do not fear for my health, good Jacques ; I was never better ! I do not grow old at all, for fear of making you unhappy. I want nothing,

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and I live like a lady. I even had some money over this year, and as my drawers shut very badly I put it in the savings bank, where I have opened an account in your name. So when you come back you will find yourself with an income. I have also furnished your chest with new linen, and I have knit you three new sea jackets.

All your friends are well. Your cousin is just dead, leaving his widow in difficulties. I told her that you had written me to give her thirty francs from your allowance; and the poor woman remembers you day and night in her prayers. So, you see, I have put that money in another sort of savings bank; but there it is our hearts which get the interest.

Good-by, dear Jacquot. Write to me often, and always remember the good God, and your old mother,

PHROSINE MILLOT.

Good son, and worthy mother! how such examples bring us back to a love for the human race! In a fit of misanthropic fancy we may envy the fate of the savage, and prefer that of the bird to our own; but impartial observation soon does justice to such paradoxes. We find, on examination, that in the mixed good and evil of human nature the good so far abounds that we are not in the habit of noticing it, while the evil strikes

us precisely because it is the exception. If nothing is perfect, nothing is so bad as to be without its compensation or its remedy. What spiritual riches there are in the midst of the evils of society! How the moral world redeems the material!

What will always distinguish man from the rest of creation is his power of deliberate affection and of enduring self-sacrifice. The mother who took care of her brood in the corner of my window devoted to them the time necessary for fulfilling the laws which insure the preservation of her kind; but she obeyed an instinct and not a preference. When she had accomplished the mission appointed her by Providence she cast off the duty as we get rid of a burden, and she returned again to her selfish liberty. The other mother, on the contrary, will go on with her task as long as God shall leave her here; the life of her son will still remain, so to speak, joined to her own; and when she disappears from the earth she will leave there that part of herself.

Thus the affections make for us a separate life in the universe. Thanks to them, we enjoy a sort of earthly immortality; and if other beings *succeed* one another, man alone *perpetuates* himself.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAMILY OF MICHAEL ABOUT.

SEPTEMBER 15TH, EIGHT O'CLOCK. —
S This morning, while I was arranging my books, Mother Genevieve came to bring me the basket of fruit I buy of her every Sunday. For nearly twenty years since I have lived in this quarter I have dealt at her little fruit-shop. Perhaps I should be better served elsewhere, but Mother Genevieve has but little custom; to leave her would do her harm, and cause her unnecessary pain. It seems to me that the length of our acquaintance has put me under a sort of tacit obligation to her; my patronage has become her property.

She put the basket on my table, and as I wanted her husband, who is a joiner, to add some shelves to my bookcase, she went downstairs immediately to send him to me.

At first I did not notice either her looks or the sound of her voice; but, now that I recall them, it seems to me that she was not as jovial as usual. Can Mother Genevieve be in trouble about anything?

Poor woman! All her best years were subject to such bitter trials that she might think

she had received her full share already. If I lived a hundred years I should never forget the circumstances which first made her known to me, and which obtained for her my respect.

It was at the time of my first coming to the faubourg. I had noticed her empty fruit-shop, which nobody entered, and, drawn by its forsaken appearance, I made my little purchases there. I have always instinctively preferred the poor shops; there is less choice in them, but it seems to me that my purchase is a sign of sympathy with a brother in poverty. These little dealings are almost always an anchor of hope to those whose very existence is in peril — the only resource for some orphan. There the aim of the tradesman is not to grow rich himself, but to live! The purchase that you make is more than an exchange — it is a good action.

Mother Genevieve at that time was still young, but had already lost that fresh bloom of youth which, among the poor, is so soon blighted by suffering. Her husband, a clever joiner, gradually left off working, to become, according to the picturesque expression of the workshops, *a worshipper of Holy Monday*. The wages of the week, always reduced to two or three working days, were completely

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dedicated by him to the worship of this god of the Barriers,¹ and Genevieve herself must supply all the wants of the household.

One evening, when I went to make some trifling purchases of her, I heard quarrelling in the back shop. There were the voices of several women, among which I distinguished that of Genevieve, broken by sobs. Looking in I saw the fruit-woman kissing the child in her arms, while its foster mother seemed to be claiming her wages. The poor woman, who without doubt had exhausted every explanation and every excuse, was crying in silence, and one of her neighbors was trying in vain to appease the peasant. Excited by that love of money which the evils of a hard rural life but too well excuse, and disappointed by the refusal of her expected wages, the nurse was launching forth in recriminations, threats, and abuse. In spite of myself I listened to the quarrel, not daring to interfere, and not thinking of going away, when Michael Arout appeared at the shop door.

The joiner had just come from the Barrier, where he had passed part of the day at the public house. His blouse, without a belt, and

¹ The cheap wine-shops are outside the Barriers, to avoid the *octroi*, or municipal excise.

open at the throat, showed none of the noble stains of toil. He held his cap in his hand, which he had just picked up out of the mud; his hair was in disorder, his eye fixed, and the pallor of drunkenness was in his face. He came reeling in and looked wildly around him, calling Genevieve.

She heard his voice, uttered a cry, and sprang into the shop; but at the sight of the miserable man, who was trying in vain to steady himself, she pressed the child to her heart, and bent over it weeping.

The peasant and the neighbor had followed her.

"Come, come! Do you intend to pay me, after all?" cried the former in a rage.

"Ask the master for the money," said the woman from the next door, ironically pointing to the joiner, who had just fallen against the counter.

The countrywoman looked at him.

"Ah! he is the father," returned she. "Well, what idle beggars, not to have a penny to pay honest people, and to get tipsy like that!"

The drunkard raised his head.

"What! What!" stammered he; "who is it that talks of wine? I've had nothing but

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brandy! But I am going back again to get some wine! Wife, give me your money; there are some friends waiting for me at the *Père la Tuille*."

Genevieve did not answer; he went behind the counter, opened the till, and began to rummage there.

"You see where the money of the house goes!" observed the neighbor to the countrywoman. "How can the poor unhappy woman pay you when he takes all?"

"Is that my fault?" replied the nurse angrily. "They owe it to me, and somehow or other they must pay me!"

And letting loose her tongue, as such countrywomen do, she told at length all the care she had taken of the child, and all the expense it had been to her. As she recalled all she had done, her words seemed to convince her more than ever of her rights, and to increase her anger. The poor mother, who no doubt feared that her violence would frighten the child, returned to the back shop, and put it into its cradle.

Whether the woman saw in this act a determination to escape her claims, or whether she was blinded by passion, she rushed into the next room, where I heard the sounds of

quarrelling, with which the cries of the child were soon mingled. The joiner, who was still rummaging in the till, started, and raised his head.

At the same moment Genevieve appeared at the door, holding in her arms the baby, whom the peasant was trying to snatch away from her. She ran toward the counter, and throwing herself behind her husband, cried:

"Michael, defend your son!"

The drunken man quickly stood erect, like one waking with a start.

"My son!" stammered he; "what son?"

His looks fell upon the child; a vague gleam of intelligence passed over his face.

"Robert," resumed he; "it is Robert!"

He tried to steady himself on his feet, that he might take the baby, but he tottered. The foster mother approached him in a rage.

"My money, or I shall take the child away!" cried she. "I have nursed him and brought him up; if you don't pay me for keeping him alive he must be to you as if he were dead. I shall not go until I have either my due or the baby."

"And what would you do with him?" murmured Genevieve, pressing Robert to her bosom.

"Take him to the Foundling!" replied the countrywoman harshly; "that hospital is a better mother than you are, for it pays for the little ones it cares for."

At the word "Foundling" Genevieve had exclaimed aloud in horror. With her arms wound round her son, and his head hidden in her bosom, she had retreated to the wall, and stood with her back against it, like a lioness defending her young. The neighbor and I looked at this scene without knowing how to interfere. As for Michael, he looked at us by turns, making a visible effort to understand it all. When his eye rested upon Genevieve and the child it lighted up with a gleam of pleasure; but when he turned toward us he again became stupid and hesitating.

At last, apparently making a prodigious effort, he cried out, "Wait!"

And, going to a tub full of water, he plunged his face into it several times.

All eyes were turned toward him; the peasant herself seemed astonished. At length he raised his dripping head. This bath had partly dispelled his drunkenness; he looked at us for a moment, then he turned to Genevieve, and his face brightened.

"Robert!" cried he, going up to the child

and taking him in his arms. "Ah! give him me, wife; I want to look at him."

The mother seemed to give up his son to him reluctantly and stood before him with her arms extended, as if she feared the child would fall. The nurse began to speak again, renewing her claims, and this time threatening to appeal to law. At first Michael listened to her attentively, and when he understood her meaning he gave the child back to his mother.

"How much do we owe you?" asked he.

The countrywoman began to reckon up the different expenses, which amounted to a little more than thirty francs. The joiner fumbled in the bottom of his pockets, but could find nothing. His forehead became more and more frowning; low curses escaped him. All of a sudden he felt in his breast, drew forth a great watch, and holding it up above his head —

"Here it is — here's your money!" cried he with a joyful laugh; "a watch, number one! I always said it would keep for a drink on a dry day; but it is not I who will drink it, but the young one. Ah! Ah! Ah! Go and sell it for me, neighbor, and if that is not enough I have my ear-rings. Eh! Genevieve, take them off for me; the ear-rings will make

all square ! They shall not say you have been disgraced on account of the child — no, not even if I must pledge a bit of my flesh ! My watch, my ear-rings, and my ring — get rid of all of them for me at the goldsmith's ; pay the woman ; and let the little brat go to sleep. Give him me, Genevieve ; I will put him to bed."

And, taking the baby from the arms of his mother, he carried him with a steady step to his cradle.

It was easy to see the change which took place in Michael from this day. He broke with all his old drinking acquaintances. He went early every morning to his work, and returned regularly in the evening to finish the day with Genevieve and Robert. Very soon he did not wish to leave them at all ; he hired a place near the fruit-shop, and worked in it on his own account.

They would soon have been able to live in comfort, had it not been for the expenses which the child brought. Everything was sacrificed to his education. He had gone through the regular school training, had studied mathematics, drawing, and the carpenter's trade, and had only begun to work a few months ago. Till now they had been exhausting

every resource possible to them to push him forward in his business; but, happily, all these efforts had not proved useless: the seed had brought forth its fruits, and the harvest was close at hand.

While I was thus recalling these remembrances to my mind, Michael had come in, and was placing the shelves where they were wanted.

While I was writing the notes of my journal I was also studying the joiner.

The excesses of his youth and the labor of his manhood have deeply marked his face; his hair is thin and gray, his shoulders stooping, his legs shrunken and slightly bent. There seems a sort of depression in his whole being. His very features have an expression of sorrow and despondency. He answered my questions by monosyllables, and like a man who wishes to avoid conversation. Whence comes this dejection, when one would think he had all he could wish for? I should like to know!

Ten o'clock. — Michael has just gone downstairs for a tool he has forgotten. I have at last succeeded in drawing from him the secret of his sorrow and Genevieve's. Their son Robert is the cause of it!

Not that he has turned out badly after all their care, not that he is idle or dissipated; but they both hoped that he would never leave them any more. The presence of the young man was to have renewed and made glad their lives; his mother counted the days, his father prepared everything to receive a dear work-fellow; and at the very moment when they were thus to be repaid for all their sacrifices Robert had suddenly informed them that he had just engaged himself to a contractor at Versailles.

All their remonstrances and prayers were useless; he urged the necessity of initiating himself into all the details of an important contract, the facilities he should have in his new position for following out researches already begun, and of the hope he had of applying them. At last, when his mother, having come to the end of her arguments, began to cry, he hastily kissed her, and went away that he might avoid further remonstrances.

He had been absent a year, and there was no prospect of his return. His parents hardly saw him once a month, and then he only stayed a few moments.

"I have been punished where I had hoped

to be rewarded," Michael said to me just now. "I had hoped for a saving and industrious son, and God has given me an ambitious and avaricious one! I had always said to myself that when once he was grown up we should have him always with us, to recall our youth and to cheer our hearts. His mother was always thinking of getting him married, so as to have children again to care for. You know that women must always busy themselves about others. As for me, I thought of him as working near my bench, and singing his new songs; for he has learnt music, and was one of the best singers at the Orphéon. Only a dream, sir! As soon as the bird was fledged he took to flight, and remembers neither father nor mother. Yesterday, for instance, was the day we expected him; he should have come to supper with us. No Robert to-day, either! He has had some plan to finish or some bargain to arrange, and his old parents come last of all, after the customers and the joiner's work. Ah, if I could have guessed how it would turn out! Fool! to have sacrificed my likings and my money, for nearly twenty years, to bring up a thankless son! Was it for this I took the trouble to cure myself of drinking, to break with my friends, to become

an example to the neighborhood? The jovial good fellow has made a goose of himself. Oh, if I had to begin again! No, no! you see women and children are our bane. They soften our hearts; they lead us a life of hope and affection; we pass a quarter of our lives in fostering the growth of a grain of corn which is to be everything to us in our old age, and when the harvest-time comes — good night, the ear is empty!”

While he was speaking, Michael's voice became hoarse, his eye fierce, and his lips quivered. I wanted to answer him, but I could only think of commonplace consolations, and I was silent. The joiner pretended he wanted a tool, and left me.

Poor father! Ah, I know those moments of temptation when, hardly rewarded by our consciousness of right doing, we regret having done right! Who has not felt this weakness in hours of trial, and who has not uttered, at least once, the mournful exclamation of Brutus?

But if *virtue is only a word*, what is there in life which is true and real? No, I will not believe that goodness is in vain! It does not always give the joys that we hoped for, but it brings others. In this world every-

thing is ruled by order, and has its cause and effect, and virtue cannot be the sole exception to the general law. If it had been harmful to those who practise it, experience would have avenged them; but experience has, on the contrary, made it more universal and more holy. We only accuse it of being a faithless debtor because we demand an immediate payment, and one which appeals to our senses. We always consider life as a fairy tale, in which every good action must be rewarded by a miracle. We do not accept as payment a quiet conscience, self-content, or a good name among men — treasures more precious than any other, but whose value we do not feel till after we have lost them!

Michael has come back, and is at his work again. His son had not yet come.

While telling me of his hopes and his grievous disappointments he has become excited; he unceasingly goes over the same subject, always adding something to his grievances. He has just wound up his confidences by speaking to me of a joiner's business which he had hoped to buy, and work to good account with Robert's help. The present owner had made a fortune by it, and, after thirty

years of business, he was thinking of retiring to one of the ornamental cottages in the outskirts of the city, a frequent retreat for the frugal and successful workingman. Michael had not indeed the two thousand francs which must be paid down ; but perhaps he could have persuaded Master Benoit to wait. Robert's presence would have been a guarantee for him, for the young man could not fail to insure the prosperity of a workshop ; besides science and skill, he had the imagination to discover and bring to perfection. His father had found among his drawings a new plan for a staircase, which had occupied his thoughts for a long time ; and he even suspected him of having engaged himself to the Versailles contractor for the very purpose of executing it. The youth was tormented by this spirit of invention, which took possession of his whole being, and, while devoting his energies to study, he had no time to listen to his heart.

Michael told me all this with a mixed feeling of pride and vexation. I saw that he was proud of the son whom he was abusing, and that his very pride made him more sensible of his son's neglect.

Six o'clock P.M. — I have just finished a happy day. How many things have happened

within a few hours, and what a change for Genevieve and Michael!

He had just finished the shelves, and telling me about his son, while I laid the cloth for my breakfast.

Suddenly we heard hurried steps in the passage, the door opened, and Genevieve entered with Robert.

The joiner gave a start of joyful surprise, but repressed it immediately, as if he wished to keep up the appearance of displeasure.

The young man did not appear to notice it, but threw himself into his arms in an eager way which surprised me. Genevieve, whose face shone with happiness, seemed so anxious to speak that she could scarcely restrain herself.

I welcomed Robert, who answered me with easy politeness.

"I expected you yesterday," said Michael Arout rather drily.

"Forgive me, father," replied the young workman, "but I had business at St. Germain's. I could not come back till very late, and then the master kept me."

The joiner looked at his son sideways, and took up his hammer again.

"All right," muttered he in a grumbling

tone; "when we are with other people we must do as they wish; but there are some who like better to eat black bread with their own knife than partridges with the silver fork of a master."

"And I am one of those, father," replied Robert merrily; "but, as the proverb says, *you must shell the peas before you can eat them*. I needed first to work in a great workshop" —

"To go on with your plan of the staircase," interrupted Michael ironically.

"You must now say M. Raymond's plan, father," replied Robert, smiling.

"Why?"

"Because I have sold it to him."

The joiner, who was planing a board, turned round quickly.

"Sold it?" cried he, with sparkling eyes.

"For the reason that I was not rich enough to give it to him."

Michael threw down the board and tool.

"There he is again!" resumed he angrily; "his good genius puts an idea into his head which would have made him known, and he goes and sells it to a rich man, who will take the honor of it himself."

"Well, what harm is there in that?" asked Genevieve.

"What harm?" cried the joiner, in a passion. "You understand nothing about it — you are a woman; but he — he knows well that a true workman would never give up his own inventions for money, any more than a soldier would give up his cross. That is his glory; he is bound to keep it for the honor it does him! Ah, thunder! If I had ever made a discovery, rather than put it up at auction I would have sold one of my eyes! Don't you see that a new invention is like a child to a workman? He takes care of it, he brings it up, he makes a way for it in the world, and it is only a heartless man who bargains it away."

Robert colored a little.

"You will think differently, father," said he, "when you know why I sold my plan."

"Yes, and you will thank him for it," added Genevieve, who could no longer keep silence.

"Never!" replied Michael.

"But, wretched man," cried she, "he only sold it for our sakes!"

The joiner looked at his wife and son with astonishment. They must explain to him. The latter told Michael how he had entered into a negotiation with Master Benoit, who

had positively refused to sell his business unless one-half of the two thousand francs was paid down. It was in the hope of obtaining this sum that he had gone to work with the contractor at Versailles; he had had an opportunity of trying his invention and of finding a purchaser. Thanks to the money received, he had just concluded the bargain with Benoit, and had brought his father the key of the new work-yard.

This explanation was given by the young workman with so much modesty and simplicity that I was quite touched. Genevieve cried; Michael pressed his son to his heart, and in a long embrace he seemed to ask his pardon for having unjustly accused him.

All was now explained to Robert's credit. The absence which his parents had ascribed to indifference really came from his affection: he had neither obeyed the voice of ambition nor of avarice, nor even the nobler passion of inventive genius; his whole end and aim had been the happiness of Genevieve and Michael. The day for proving his gratitude had come, and he had returned them sacrifice for sacrifice!

After the explanations and exclamations of joy were over the three were about to leave

me; but the cloth being laid, I added three plates and kept them to breakfast.

The meal was prolonged; the fare was indifferent; but the overflow of affection made it delicious. Never had I better understood the wonderful charm of family love! What sweetness in those joys which are always shared with others; in that community of interests which unites such varied feelings; in that association of existences which makes one single life! What is man without those fireside affections, which, like so many roots, fix him firmly in the earth, and let him draw in all the juices of life? Energy, happiness — does it not all come from them? Without family life where would man learn to love, to associate, to deny himself? Does not the little community of home teach us how to live in the larger community? Such is the holiness of home that to express our relation with God we have been obliged to borrow the words invented for the family life. Men have called themselves *sons* of the heavenly *Father*!

Ah! let us carefully preserve these bonds of domestic union; do not let us unbind the human sheaf and scatter its ears to all the caprices of chance and of the winds; but let

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us rather enlarge this holy law; let us carry the habits of home beyond its bounds; and let us realize, if we can, the prayer of the Apostle of the Gentiles when he exclaimed to the new-born children of Christ: "Be ye like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."¹

CHAPTER X.

OUR COUNTRY.

OCTOBER 12TH, SEVEN O'CLOCK A.M. — The nights have already become cold and long; the sun, shining through my curtains, no longer wakes me very early; and even when my eyes are open the pleasant warmth of the bed holds me fast under my counterpane. Every morning begins a long argument between my activity and my indolence; and, snugly wrapped up to the eyes, I wait, like the Gascon, until they have succeeded in coming to an agreement.

This morning, however, a light which shone through my door upon my pillow woke me earlier than usual. In vain I turned from

¹ *Philippians*, ii, 2.

one side to the other; the obstinate light, like a victorious enemy, pursued me everywhere. At last, quite out of patience, I sat up and hurled my nightcap to the foot of the bed!

(I will observe, by way of parenthesis, that the various evolutions of this pacific head-gear seem to have been, from the remotest time, symbols of the passionate emotions of the mind; for our language has borrowed its most common images from them. Thus we say: *Mettre son bonnet de travers; jeter son bonnet par-dessus les moulins; avoir la tête près du bonnet*, etc.¹)

But be this as it may, I got up in a very bad humor, grumbling at my new neighbor, who took it into his head to be wakeful when I wished to sleep. We are all so made; we do not understand that others may live after their own fashion. Each one of us is like the earth according to the old system of Ptolemy, and wishes to have the whole universe revolve round himself. On this point, to make use of the metaphor already used: *Tous les hommes ont la tête dans le même bonnet.*²

¹ To be in a bad humor.

To brave the opinions of the world.

To be angry about a trifle.

² Said of those who are of the same opinions and tastes.

I had for the time being, as I have already said, thrown mine to the other end of my bed; and I slowly disengaged my limbs from the warm bed-clothes, while making a host of disagreeable reflections upon the inconvenience of having neighbors.

For more than a month I had not had to complain of those whom chance had given me; most of them only came in to sleep, and went away again as soon as they rose. I was almost always alone on this top story — with only the clouds and the sparrows!

But in Paris nothing lasts; the current of life carries us along, like seaweed torn from the rock; the houses are vessels which take mere passengers. How many different faces have I already seen passing along the corridor belonging to our attics! How many companions of a few days have disappeared forever! Some are lost in that medley of the living who are whirled continually under the whip of necessity, and others are with the dead, who sleep under the hand of God!

Peter the bookbinder is one of these last. Wrapped up in selfishness, he lived alone and friendless, and he died as he had lived. His loss neither was mourned by any one nor dis-

arranged anything in the world ; there was merely a ditch filled up in the graveyard, and an empty attic in our house.

It is the same room which my new neighbor has occupied for a few days.

To say truly (now that I am quite awake, and my ill humor has gone to join my night-cap) — this new neighbor, although rising earlier than suits my idleness, is none the less a very good man : he bears his misfortunes as few know how to carry their good fortune with cheerfulness and moderation.

Yet fate has cruelly tried him. Father Chaufour is but the wreck of a man. In place of one of his arms hangs an empty sleeve ; his left leg is made by the turner, and he drags the right along with difficulty ; but above these ruins rises a calm and happy face. While looking upon his countenance, radiant with serene energy, while listening to his clear voice, accented, so to speak, with goodness, we see that the soul has remained entire in the half-destroyed covering. The fortress is a little damaged, as Father Chaufour says, but the garrison is in good condition.

Decidedly, the more I think of this excellent man the more I reproach myself for the malediction I hurled at him when I awoke.

We are generally too indulgent of our secret wrongs toward our neighbor. All ill will which does not pass the domain of thought seems to us innocent, and with our clumsy justice we absolve ourselves from the sin which does not betray itself in action!

But are we then only bound to others by the enforcement of laws? Beyond these external relations is there not a real relation of feeling between men? Do we not owe to those who live under the same heaven as ourselves the help not only of acts, but of intentions? Ought not every human life to be like a vessel that we accompany with our prayers for a happy voyage? It is not enough that men do not harm each other; they must also help and love one another! The papal benediction, *Urbi et orbi!* should be the constant cry of all hearts. To condemn him who does not deserve it, even in the mind, even by a passing thought, is to break the great law which has established the union of souls here below, and to which Christ has given the sweet name of *charity*.

These thoughts came into my mind as I finished dressing, and I said to myself that I owed Father Chaufour some reparation. To make amends for my feeling of ill will just

now, I owed him some visible proof of sympathy. I heard him humming a tune in his room; he was at work, and I determined to make the first neighborly call.

Eight o'clock P.M. — I found Father Chau-four at a table lighted by a little smoky lamp, without a fire, although it is already cold, making large pasteboard boxes; he was humming a popular song in a low tone. When I entered the room he uttered an exclamation of joyous surprise.

“Ah! is it you, neighbor? Come in, then! I did not think you got up so early, so I muted my strings; I was afraid of waking you.”

Excellent man — while I was sending him to the devil he was putting himself out of his way for me!

This thought touched me, and I gave him a neighborly greeting with a warmth which opened his heart.

“Faith! you seem to me to have the look of a good Christian,” said he in a voice of soldierlike cordiality, shaking me by the hand. “I do not like those people who look on a landing-place as a frontier line, and treat their neighbors like Cossacks. When men snuff the same air, and speak the same lingo,

they are not meant to turn their backs on each other. Sit down there, neighbor, without being urged ; only take care of the stool, it has but three legs, and good will must take the place of the fourth ! ”

“ It seems that that is a treasure which there is no lack of here,” I answered.

“ Good will ? ” repeated Chaufour ; “ that is all my mother left me, and I take it no son has received a better inheritance. So they used to call me *Mr. Content* in the battery.”

“ You are a soldier, then ? ”

“ I served in the Third Artillery under the Republic, and afterward in the Guard, through all the commotions. I was at Jemappes and at Waterloo ; so I was at the christening and at the burial of our glory, as one may say ! ”

I looked at him with astonishment.

“ And how old were you, then, at Jemappes ? ” asked I.

“ Somewhere about fifteen,” said he.

“ How came you to think of being a soldier so early ? ”

“ I did not really think about it. I then worked at toy making, and never dreamt that France could ask anything else of me than to make her draught-boards, shuttle-

cocks, and cups and balls. But I had an old uncle at Vincennes whom I went to see from time to time—a Fontenoy veteran in the same rank of life as myself, but with ability enough to have been a marshal. Unluckily, in those days there was no way for common people to get on. My uncle, whose services would have made him a prince under *the other*, had retired as a mere sub-lieutenant. But you should have seen him in his uniform, with his cross of St. Louis, his wooden leg, his white mustaches, and his noble face! You would have said he was a portrait of one of those old heroes in powdered hair which you see at Versailles!

“Every time I visited him he said something which remained fixed in my memory. But one day I found him very grave.

“‘Jerome,’ said he, ‘do you know what is going on on the frontier?’

“‘No, lieutenant,’ I answered.

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘the country is in danger!’

“I did not understand him, yet it made some impression on me.

“‘Perhaps you have never thought what your country means,’ he continued, placing his hand on my shoulder: ‘it is all that sur-

rounds you, all that has brought you up and fed you, all that you have loved! This ground that you see, these houses, these trees, those laughing girls who are passing — this is your country! The laws which protect you, the bread which rewards your work, the words you exchange with others, the joy and grief which come to you from the men and things among which you live — this is your country! The little room where you used to see your mother, the remembrances she has left you, the earth in which she rests — this is your country! You see it, you breathe it, everywhere! Picture to yourself, my son, your rights and your duties, your affections and your wants, your memories and your blessings; unite them all under a single name — and that name will be your country!’

“I was trembling with emotion, and great tears were in my eyes.

“‘Ah, I understand!’ cried I; ‘it is our home in the large; it is that part of the world where God has placed our bodies and our souls.’

“‘You are right, Jerome,’ continued the old soldier; ‘so you comprehend, do you not, what we owe it?’

"‘Truly,’ I replied, ‘we owe it all that we are; it is a question of the heart.’

"‘And of honesty, my son,’ concluded he. ‘The member of a family who does not contribute his share of work and of happiness fails in duty, and is a bad kinsman; the member of a community who does not enrich it with all his might, with all his courage, with all his heart, defrauds it of what belongs to it, and is a dishonest man. He, too, who enjoys the advantages of having a country, and does not share its burdens, forfeits his honor, and is a bad citizen!’

"‘And what must one do, lieutenant, to be a good citizen?’ I asked.

"‘Do for your country what you would do for your father and mother,’ said he.

"I did not answer at once; my heart was swelling, and the blood boiling in my veins; but returning along the road, my uncle’s words were, so to speak, written before my eyes. I repeated, ‘Do for your country what you would do for your father and mother.’ And my country is in danger — an enemy attacks it — while I — I turn cups and balls!

"This thought so possessed me all night that the next day I returned to Vincennes to announce to the lieutenant that I had just

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enlisted, and was going off to the frontiers. The gallant man gave me his cross of St. Louis, and I went away as proud as an ambassador.

“That is why, neighbor, I became a volunteer under the Republic before I had cut my wisdom teeth.”

All this was told quietly, and in the cheerful spirit of one who looks upon accomplished duty neither as a merit nor a burden.

While he spoke, Father Chaufour grew animated, not on account of himself, but of his subject. Evidently what occupied him in the drama of life was not his own part, but the drama itself.

This kind of disinterestedness touched me. I prolonged my visit, and was as frank as possible, so as to win his confidence in return. In an hour's time he knew my position and my habits; I was on the footing of an old acquaintance.

I even confessed the ill humor the light of his lamp had put me into a little while before. He took what I said with that affectionate gayety which comes from a heart in the right place, and which takes everything on the right side. He neither spoke to me of the necessity which obliged him to work while I

slept nor of the deprivations of the old soldier over against the luxury of the young clerk; he only struck his forehead, accusing himself of thoughtlessness, and promised to put list round his door!

O great and beautiful soul, for whom nothing turns to bitterness; strong only for duty and benevolence!

October 15th. — This morning I was looking at a little engraving that I had framed and hung over my writing-table; it is a design of Gavarni's, in which, in a grave mood, he had represented "*A Veteran and a Conscript.*"

Often contemplating these two figures, so different in expression, and so true to life, both have become living in my eyes; I have seen them move, I have heard them speak; the picture has become a real scene, of which I am a spectator.

The veteran advances slowly, his hand leaning on the shoulder of the young soldier. His eyes, closed forever, no longer see the sun shining through the flowering chestnut trees. In place of his right arm hangs an empty sleeve, and he walks with a wooden leg, and those who pass turn to look as they hear its sound on the pavement.

At the sight of this ancient wreck of our patriotic wars the greater number shake their heads in pity, and heave a sigh or utter an imprecation.

"See the worth of glory!" says a portly merchant, turning away his eyes in horror.

"What a deplorable use of human life!" rejoins a young man who carries a volume of philosophy under his arm.

"The trooper had better not have left his plough," adds a countryman, with a cunning look.

"Poor old man!" murmurs a woman, almost crying.

The veteran has heard, and knits his brow; for it seems to him that his guide has grown thoughtful. The latter, struck by what he hears around him, hardly answers the old man's questions, and his eyes, looking into space, seem to be seeking there for the solution of some problem.

There is a twitching of the gray mustaches of the veteran; he stops abruptly, and, holding back his young guide with his only arm —

"They all pity me," he says, "because they do not understand; but if I could answer them" —

"What would you say to them, father?" asks the young man with curiosity.

"I would first tell the woman who weeps when she looks at me to keep her tears for other misfortunes; for each of my wounds calls to mind some struggle for the flag. One may doubt the devotion of some; mine is visible. I carry the marks of service, written with the enemy's steel and lead; to pity me for having done my duty is to suppose it would have been better to be false to it."

"And what would you say to the peasant, father?"

"I would tell him that, to drive the plough in peace, we must first secure the country itself; and that as long as there are foreigners ready to eat our harvest there must be arms to defend it."

"But the young student, too, shook his head, lamenting such a use of life."

"Because he does not know what self-sacrifice and suffering can teach. The books which he studies we have put in practice, though we never read them; the principles he applauds we have defended with powder and bayonet."

"And at the price of your limbs and your

blood. The merchant said, when he saw your maimed body, 'See the worth of glory!'

"Do not believe him, my son; true glory is the bread of the soul; this is what nourishes self-sacrifice, patience, courage! The Master of all has given it as one tie the more between men. When we wish to be distinguished by our brothers, do we not thus prove our esteem and our sympathy for them? The longing for admiration is but one side of love. No, no; true glory can never be too costly! What we should deplore, child, are not the infirmities which prove generous self-sacrifice, but those which our vices or our imprudence have brought upon us. Ah! if I could speak aloud to those who, when passing, cast looks of pity upon me I should say to the young man whose excesses have dimmed his sight before he is old, 'What have you done with your eyes?' To the slothful man who with difficulty drags along his mass of flesh, 'What have you done with your feet?' To the old man who is punished for his intemperance by the gout, 'What have you done with your hands?' To all, 'What have you done with the days God granted you, with the faculties you should have used for the good of your brethren? If you can-

not answer, pity no longer the old soldier maimed in his country's cause; for he, at least, can show his scars without a blush.'"

October 16th. — The little engraving has made me understand better Father Chaufour's merits and I esteem him the more.

He has just now left my attic. No longer a single day passes without his coming to work by my fire, or without my sitting and talking by his bench.

The old artilleryman has seen much, and likes to tell of it. For twenty years an armed traveller throughout Europe, he fought without hatred, for he was possessed by a single thought — the honor of the national flag. It might have been his superstition, if you will; but it was, at the same time, his safeguard.

The word FRANCE, which was then resounding so gloriously throughout the world, served as a talisman to him against all temptations. To support a great name may seem a burden to vulgar minds, but to the strong it is an encouragement.

"I, too, have had many moments," said he to me the other day, "when I have been tempted to make friends with the devil. War is not precisely the school for rural virtues.

By dint of burning, destroying, and killing, you grow a little hardened to sentiment; and, when the bayonet has made you king, the wish to be an autocrat sometimes is rather intrusive. But then I called to mind that country of which the lieutenant spoke to me, and I whispered to myself the well-known phrase, *Toujours Français!* It has been laughed at since. People who would make a joke of the death of their mother have turned it into ridicule, as if the name of our country was not both a noble and a binding thing. For my part, I shall never forget from how many follies the title of Frenchman has kept me. When, overcome with weariness, I have found myself in the rear of the colors, and when the musketry was rattling in the front ranks, many a time I have heard a voice, which whispered in my ear, 'Leave the others to fight, and for to-day take care of your own skin!' But then, that word *Français!* sounded within me, and I pressed forward to the help of the brigade. At other times, when irritated by hunger, cold, and wounds, I have reached the hovel of some *Meinherr*, I have been seized by a longing to break the master's back, and to burn his hut; but I whispered to myself, *Français!* and this name

would not rhyme either with "incendiary" or "murderer." So I have passed through kingdoms from east to west, and from north to south, always determined not to disgrace the flag. The lieutenant, you see, had taught me a magic word — *My country!* Not only must we defend it, but we must also make it great and beloved."

October 17th. — To-day I have paid my neighbor a long visit. A chance expression led the way to a new confidence.

I asked him whether both his limbs had been lost in the same battle.

"No, no!" replied he; "the cannon only took my leg; it was the Clamart quarries that my arm went to feed."

And when I asked him for the particulars —

"That's as easy as to say good morning," continued he. "After the great break-up at Waterloo I stayed three months in the camp hospital to give my wooden leg time to grow. As soon as I was able to hobble a little I took leave of headquarters, and went toward Paris, where I hoped to find some relation or friend; but no — all were gone, or under ground. I should have been less of a stranger at Vienna, Madrid, or Berlin. And although I had a leg the less to provide for, I was

none the better off; my appetite had come back, and my last sous were taking flight.

"I had indeed met my old colonel, who remembered that I had helped him out of the skirmish at Montereau by giving him my horse, and he had offered me bed and board at his house. I knew that the year before he had married a castle and not a few farms, so that I might become permanent coat-brusher to a millionaire, which was not without its temptations. It remained to see if there was anything better to do. One evening I set myself to reflect upon it.

"‘Let us see, *Chaufour*,’ said I to myself; ‘you must act like a man. The colonel’s place suits you, but cannot you do anything better? Your body is still in good condition, and your arms strong; do you not owe all your strength to your country, as your Vincennes uncle said? Why not leave some old soldier, more cut up than you are, to be a pensioner of the colonel? Come, trooper, you are still fit for another stout charge or two! You must not lie by before your time.’

"Whereupon I thanked the colonel, and offered my services to an old artilleryman, who had gone back to his fireside at Clamart and had taken up the quarryman’s pick again.

"For the first few months I played the conscript's part — that is to say, there was more stir than work; but with a good will one gets the better of stones, as of everything else. I did not become, so to speak, the leader of a column, but I brought up the rank among the good workmen, and I ate my bread with a good appetite, since I had earned it with a good will. For even in the quarry, you see, I still kept my pride. The thought that I was working to do my part in changing rocks into houses pleased me. I said to myself, 'Courage, Chauffour, my old boy; you are helping to beautify your country!' And that kept up my spirit.

"Unfortunately, some of my companions were rather too sensible to the charms of the brandy bottle; so much so that one day one of them, who could hardly tell his right hand from his left, thought proper to strike a light close to a charged mine. The mine exploded suddenly, and sent a shower of grape-shot among us which killed three men, and carried away the arm of which I have now only the sleeve."

"So you were again without any trade?" said I to the old soldier.

"That is to say, I had to change my trade,"

he answered quietly. "The trouble was to find one which would be contented with five fingers instead of ten; but I found it."

"How was that?"

"Among the Paris street-sweepers."

"What! you have been one" —

"Of the health squad for a while, neighbor, and that was not my worst time, either. The corps of sweepers is not so low as it is dirty, I can tell you! There are old actresses in it who could never learn to save their money, and ruined merchants from the exchange; we even had a professor of the classics, who for a little drink would recite Latin or Greek tragedies to you, as you chose. They could not have competed for the Montyon prize; but our poverty made us excuse each other's vices, and our good humor cheered our poverty. I was as ragged and as cheerful as the rest, while trying to be something better. Even in the mire of the gutter I preserved my faith that nothing is dishonorable which serves our country.

"'Chaufour,' said I to myself, laughing softly, 'after the sword, the hammer; after the hammer, the broom; you are going downstairs, my old boy, but you are still serving your country!'"

"However, you left your new profession?" said I.

"In the cause of reform, neighbor. Street-sweepers seldom have their feet dry, and the damp at last opened the wounds in my good leg again. I could no longer follow the regiment, and I had to lay down my arms. It is now two months since I left off working in the *sanitary department* of Paris.

"At first I was daunted. Of my four limbs I had now only my right hand, and even that had lost its strength; so it was necessary to find some homely occupation for it! After trying a little of everything I fell upon card-box making, and here I am at cases for the tufts of the national guard; it is work of little profit, but within the capacity of all. By getting up at four and working till eight I earn sixty-five centimes; my lodging and bowl of soup take fifty of them, and there are three sous over for luxuries. So I am richer than France herself, for I have no deficit in my budget; and I continue to serve her, since I save her pompons."

At these words Father Chaufour looked at me with a smile, and his great scissors began cutting the green paper again for his card-board cases. My heart was touched, and I remained lost in thought.

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Here is still another member of that sacred phalanx who in the battle of life always march in front for the example and the salvation of the world! Each of these brave soldiers has his war-cry; for this one it is "Country," for that "Home," for a third "Mankind;" but they all follow the same standard of duty; for all the same divine law of self-sacrifice reigns. To love something more than one's self — that is the secret of all that is great; to know how to live for others — that is the aim of all noble souls.

CHAPTER XI.

MORAL USE OF INVENTORIES.

NOVEMBER 13TH, NINE O'CLOCK P.M. —
I had stopped up the chinks of my window; my little carpet was nailed down in its place; my lamp, provided with its shade cast a subdued light around; and my stove made a low, murmuring sound, like some live creature.

All was silent around me. But out of doors a frozen rain swept the roofs, and with a low, rushing sound ran along the gurgling gutters;

sometimes a gust of wind forced itself under the tiles, which rattled together like castanets, and then was lost in the empty corridor. A slight, pleasurable shiver thrilled through my veins; I drew the flaps of my old wadded dressing-gown round me, I pulled my threadbare velvet cap over my eyes, and, letting myself sink deeper into my easy-chair, while my feet basked in the heat and light which shone through the door of the stove, I gave myself up to a sensation of enjoyment, made more lively by the consciousness of the storm which raged without. My eyes, swimming in a sort of mist, wandered over all the details of my peaceful room: they passed from my prints to my bookcase, resting upon the little chintz sofa, the white curtains of the iron bedstead, and the portfolio of loose papers—humble archives of the attic; then, returning to the book I held in my hand, they tried to seize once more the thread of the reading which had been thus interrupted.

In fact this book, which had at first interested me, had become painful to me. I had decided that the pictures of the writer were too sombre. His description of the miseries of the world seemed to me exaggerated; I could not believe in such excess of poverty or

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suffering; neither God nor man could show themselves so harsh toward the sons of Adam. The author had yielded to an artistic temptation: he wished to hang humanity on the cross for the sake of the picturesque, as Nero burned Rome.

Taken altogether, this poor human house, so often repaired, so much criticised, is still a pretty good abode; we find in it enough to satisfy our wants, if we only know how to limit them; the happiness of the wise man costs little, and asks but little space.

These consoling reflections became more and more confused. At last my book fell on the ground and I had not the courage to pick it up again; insensibly overcome by the luxury of the silence, the subdued light, and the warmth, I fell asleep.

I remained for some time lost in that insensibility belonging to the first sleep; at last some vague and broken sensations came over me. It seemed to me that the day grew darker, that the air became colder. I half saw bushes covered with scarlet berries which foretell the coming of winter. I was walking on a dreary road, bordered here and there with juniper trees white with frost. Then the scene suddenly changed. I was in a dili-

gence; a cold wind shook the windows; the trees, loaded with snow, passed by like ghosts; in vain I thrust my benumbed feet into the crushed straw. At last the coach stopped, and, by one of those stage effects so common in sleep, I found myself alone in a barn, without a fireplace, and open to all the winds of heaven. I saw again my mother's sweet face, hardly noticed in my childhood, the noble and stern countenance of my father, the little fair head of my sister, who died when she was ten years old: all my dead family lived again around me; they were all there, exposed to the biting cold and to the pangs of hunger. My mother prayed by the resigned old man, and my sister, rolled up on some rags of which they had made for her a bed, cried in silence, holding her bare feet in her little blue hands.

It was a page from the book I had just read, transferred to my own life.

My heart was oppressed with inexpressible anguish. Crouched in a corner, my eyes fixed upon this dreary picture, I felt the cold slowly creeping upon me, and I said to myself with bitterness:

"Let us die, since poverty is a dungeon guarded by suspicion, apathy, and contempt, from which it is vain to try to escape; let us

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die, since there is no place for us at the banquet of the living!"

I tried to rise to join my mother again, and wait at her feet for the hour of release.

This effort dispelled my dream, and I woke with a start.

I looked around me: my lamp was going out, my stove was cold, and my half-opened door let in an icy wind. I got up, with a shiver, to shut and double-lock it; then reaching the alcove, I hastily went to bed.

But the cold kept me awake a long time, and my thoughts continued the interrupted dream.

The pictures I had just accused of exaggeration now seemed but a too faithful representation of reality; and I went to sleep without being able to recover my optimism — or my warmth.

Thus did a cold stove and a half-closed door alter my point of view. All went well when my blood circulated freely; all looked gloomy when the cold seized me.

This reminds me of the story of the duchess who was obliged to pay a visit to the neighboring convent on a winter's day. The convent was poor, there was no wood, and the monks had nothing but their disci-

pline and the ardor of their prayers to keep out the cold. The duchess, who was shivering with cold, returned home touched with profound pity for the poor monks. While the servant was taking off her cloak and adding two more logs to her fire she called for her steward, and ordered him to send some wood to the convent immediately. She then had her couch moved close to the fire, whose warmth soon revived her. The recollection of what she had just suffered was speedily lost in her present comfort, when the steward came in again to ask how many loads of wood he was to send.

"Oh, you may wait," said the great lady carelessly; "the weather is much milder!"

Thus man's judgments are formed less from reason than sensation; and as sensation comes to him from the outward world, he finds himself more or less under its influence; and little by little he draws from it a portion of his habits and feelings.

It is not, then, without cause that when we wish to judge of a stranger we look for indications of his character in his surroundings. The things among which we live take on our image, and we unconsciously leave on them a thousand impressions of ourselves. As we

judge by an empty bed of the height and attitude of him who has slept in it, so the dwelling of every man betrays to a skilful observer the extent of his intelligence and the feelings of his heart. Bernardin de St.-Pierre has told the story of a young girl who refused a suitor because he would never have flowers or domestic animals in his house. Perhaps the sentence was severe, but not without reason. We may take it for granted that a man insensible to beauty and to humble affection would be ill prepared to feel the pleasures of a happy marriage.

14th, seven o'clock P.M. — This morning, as I was preparing to write in my journal, I had a visit from our old cashier.

His sight is not so good as it was, his hand begins to shake, and the work he once did is now becoming more difficult to him. I had undertaken to write out some of his papers, and he came for those I had finished.

We talked a long time by the stove, while he was drinking the cup of coffee which I forced him to take.

M. Rateau is a sensible man, who has observed much and talks little; so that he has always something worth saying.

While looking over the accounts I had pre-

pared for him his eyes fell upon my journal, and I was obliged to acknowledge that I wrote every evening for myself alone a record of my acts and thoughts. Going on from one thing to another, I began to speak to him of my dream the day before, and of my reflections on the influence of outward objects upon our ordinary feelings. He smiled.

"Ah, you too have my *superstitions!*" he said quietly. "I have always believed, like you, that *you may know the game by the lair*: we only need tact and experience, without which we expose ourselves to many rash judgments. For my part, I have been guilty of this more than once, but sometimes I have also drawn a right conclusion. I recall especially an adventure which goes back to the early years of my youth" —

He stopped. I looked at him as if I waited for his story, and he told it to me at once.

At this time he was an under clerk to an attorney at Orleans. His master had sent him to Montargis on matters of business, and he intended to return in the diligence the same evening, after having received the amount of an outstanding debt at a neighboring town; but they kept him at the debtor's house, and when he set out the night had already closed in.

Fearing that he could not reach Montargis in good time, he took a cross-road they pointed out to him. Unfortunately, the fog increased, not a star was shining, and the darkness became so thick that he lost his way. He tried to retrace his steps, passed twenty foot-paths, and at last was completely bewildered.

After the vexation of losing his place in the diligence came anxiety as to his situation. He was alone, on foot, lost in a forest without any means of finding his way, and with a considerable sum of money about him, for which he was responsible. His want of experience increased his anxiety. The idea of a forest was connected in his mind with so many adventures with thieves and robbers that he expected some fatal encounter every instant.

Truly his situation was not encouraging. The place was not considered safe, and for some time there had been rumors of the sudden disappearance of several horse-dealers, though there was no evidence of any crime.

Our young traveller, with his eyes staring into space and his ears on the watch, followed a footpath which he supposed might take him to some house or road; but woods always succeeded woods. At last he saw a light in

the distance, and in a quarter of an hour reached the high-road.

A single house whose light had attracted him appeared at a little distance. He was going toward the entrance gate of the courtyard when the trot of a horse made him turn his head. A man on horseback had just appeared at the turning of the road, and in an instant was close to him.

The first words spoken to the traveller convinced him that the farmer himself was addressing him. The young man confessed his bewilderment and found that he was on the way to Pithiviers, while Montargis was three leagues behind him.

The fog had insensibly changed into a drizzling rain, which was beginning to wet the young clerk through; he seemed afraid of the distance which still remained, and the horseman, who saw his hesitation, invited him into the farmhouse.

It had something of the look of a fortress. Surrounded by a high wall, it could not be seen except through the bars of the great gate, which was carefully closed. The farmer, who had dismounted, did not enter that way, but, turning to the right, reached another gate, also closed, of which he had the key.

Hardly had he crossed the threshold when a terrible barking resounded from both ends of the yard. The farmer told his guest to fear nothing, showing him the dogs chained to their kennels; both were of extraordinary size, and so savage that the sight of the master himself could not quiet them.

A boy, attracted by their barking, came out of the house and took the farmer's horse. The latter questioned him about some orders given before he left the house, and went toward the stable to make sure that they had been executed.

Thus left alone, our clerk looked about him.

A lantern which the boy had placed on the ground cast a dim light over the court-yard. All around seemed empty and deserted. Not a trace was visible of the disorder often seen in a country farm-yard, showing a temporary cessation of work which is soon to be resumed: no cart was left where the horses had been unharnessed, no sheaves of corn were heaped up ready for threshing, no plough lay overturned in a corner and half hidden under the freshly cut clover. The yard was swept, the barns were shut up and padlocked. Not a single vine was creeping

up the walls; there was everywhere stone, wood, iron!

He took the lantern and went up to the corner of the house. Behind was a second yard, where he heard the barking of a third dog, and a covered well was built in the middle of it.

Our traveller looked in vain for the little farm garden, where a motley array of pumpkins are creeping over the ground, or where the bees hum under the hedges of honeysuckle and elder. Verdure and flowers were nowhere to be seen. He did not even see any trace of a poultry-yard or pigeon-house. The farmer's dwelling was everywhere wanting in that which makes the grace, life, and charm of the country.

The young man thought that his host must be very careless or niggardly, to concede so little to domestic conveniences and the pleasures of the eye; and judging, in spite of himself, by what he saw, he could not help feeling a distrust of his character.

In the meantime the farmer returned from the stables, and took him into the house.

The inside of the farmhouse answered to its outside. The whitewashed walls had no other ornament than a row of guns of all

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sizes; the massive furniture scarcely redeemed its clumsy appearance by its great solidity. A doubtful cleanliness, and the absence of all minor conveniences, proved that a woman's care was wanting in the household concerns. The young clerk learned that the father, in fact, lived alone with his two sons.

Of this, indeed, the signs were plain enough. A table laid with a cloth, that no one had taken the trouble to clear away, was left near the window. The plates and dishes were placed without any order, and filled with potato parings and half-picked bones. Several empty bottles sent out an odor of brandy, which mingled with the pungent smell of tobacco smoke.

After having seated his guest the farmer lighted his pipe, and his two sons resumed their work by the fireside. Now and then the silence was broken by a short remark, answered by a word or an exclamation; and then all became as still as before.

"From my childhood," said the old cashier, "I had been very sensible to the impression of outward objects; later in life, reflection had taught me to study the causes of these impressions rather than to drive them away.

I set myself, then, to examine everything around me very attentively.

“Below the guns which I had noticed on entering some wolf-traps were suspended, and to one of them still hung the mangled remains of a paw, which they had not yet taken off from the iron teeth. The blackened chimney-piece was ornamented by an owl and a raven nailed to the wall, with extended wings, a huge nail driven through the throat of each; a fox’s skin, freshly flayed, was spread before the window, and a larder hook, fixed into the principal beam, held a headless goose, whose body swayed about over our heads.

“My eyes were offended by all these details, and I turned them again upon my hosts. The father, who sat opposite to me, only interrupted his smoking to pour out some brandy, or to address a reprimand to his sons. The eldest of these was scraping a deep bucket, and the bloody scrapings, which he threw into the fire every instant, filled the room with a sickening odor. The second son was sharpening some butcher’s knives: I learned from a word dropped by the father that they were preparing to kill a pig the next day.

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"These occupations and the whole aspect of things inside the house told of such brutish habits as seemed to explain and complete the forbidding gloom of the outside. My astonishment by degrees changed into disgust, and my disgust into uneasiness. I cannot recall the whole chain of ideas which succeeded one another in my thought; but, yielding to an invincible impulse, I got up, declaring I would go on my way.

"The farmer made some effort to keep me; he spoke of the rain, of the darkness, and of the length of the way. I replied to all that it was absolutely necessary for me to reach Montargis that very night; and thanking him for his brief hospitality I set off again with such haste as might well have confirmed the truth of my words.

"However, the freshness of the night and the exercise of walking did not fail to change the direction of my thoughts. My disgust gradually diminished as I left behind me the objects which had awakened it. I smiled at my nervousness and as the rain became heavier and colder I became more severe upon myself. I silently accused myself of the absurdity of mistaking sensations for warnings. After all, were not the farmer and his sons free to live

alone, to hunt, to keep dogs, and to kill a pig ? What was the harm of it all ? If I had been less apprehensive I should have accepted the shelter they offered me ; I should now be sleeping snugly on a truss of straw, instead of walking painfully through the cold and rain. Thus I continued to reproach myself, until toward morning I reached Montargis, tired and chilled through.

“ When, however, I got up refreshed, about the middle of the day, I instinctively returned to my first impression. The farmhouse presented itself to me under the same repulsive colors which the evening before had decided me to escape from it. Reason itself remained silent in reviewing all those coarse details, and was forced to recognize in them either the marks of a brutish nature or the presence of some baleful influence.

“ I went away the same day, having learned nothing about the farmer or his sons ; but my adventure remained deeply fixed in my memory.

“ Ten years afterward I was travelling in the diligence through the Department of the Loiret. Leaning from the window, looking at some ground cleared for the first time, as one of my travelling companions was explaining

the mode of cultivation my eyes fell upon a walled inclosure, with an iron-barred gate. I saw within, a house with closed blinds which I immediately remembered ; it was the farmhouse where I had been sheltered. I eagerly pointed it out to my companion, and asked who lived in it.

“ ‘ Nobody just now,’ replied he.

“ ‘ But did not a farmer and his two sons live in it some time ago ?’

“ ‘ The Turreaus,’ said my travelling companion, looking at me ; ‘ did you know them ?’

“ ‘ I saw them once.’

“ He shook his head.

“ ‘ Yes, yes !’ he resumed ; ‘ for many years they lived there like wolves in their den ; they only knew how to till land, kill game, and drink. The father managed the house, but men living alone, without women to love them, without children to soften them, and without God to make them think of heaven, always turn into wild beasts, you see ; so one morning the eldest son, who had been drinking too much, would not harness the horses to the plough ; his father struck him with his whip, and the son, who was mad with drink, shot him dead.’ ”

16th, *P.M.* — I have been thinking of the

story of the old cashier these two days; it fitted in so well with the thoughts that my dream had suggested.

Have I not an important lesson to learn from all this?

If our sensations have an unquestioned influence over our judgments, how happens it that we are so careless of what arouses or modifies these sensations? The external world is always reflected in us as in a mirror, and fills our minds with pictures which, unconsciously to ourselves, become the germs of our opinions or of our rules of conduct. All objects which surround us, then, are really so many talismans, stirring good or bad influences. It is for us to choose them wisely, so as to create a healthy atmosphere about us.

Convinced of this truth, I set about making a survey of my attic.

The first object on which my eyes rest is an old chart of the history of the principal monastery in my native province. I had unrolled it with much satisfaction, and placed it in the most conspicuous place on the wall. Why had I put it there? Ought this sheet of old worm-eaten parchment to be of so much value to me, who am neither an antiquary nor a scholar? Is not its real impor-

tance to me that one of the abbots who founded the monastery bore my name, and that I shall thus perhaps make of it a kind of genealogical tree for the edification of my visitors? While writing this I feel myself blush. Down with the map! let us banish it to my deepest drawer.

As I passed my glass I noticed several visiting cards complacently displayed in the frame. How does it happen that I have put only well-known names there? Here is a Polish count — a retired colonel — the deputy of my department. Quick, quick, into the fire with these proofs of vanity! and let us put in their place this card in the handwriting of our office boy, this direction for cheap dinners, and the receipt of the tradesman from whom I bought my last arm-chair. These marks of my poverty will serve, as Montaigne says, to mortify my pride, and will recall me to the modesty which befits the lowly.

I have stopped before the prints hanging upon the wall. This large and smiling Pomona, seated on sheaves of corn, whose basket is overflowing with fruit, only calls up images of joy and plenty; I was looking at her the other day when I fell asleep denying

such a thing as misery. Let us give her as companion this picture of Winter, in which everything speaks of sorrow and suffering: one picture will complement the other.

And this Happy Family of Greuze's! What joy in the children's eyes! What sweet repose in the young woman's expression! What religious feeling in the grandfather's face! May God preserve their happiness! but let us hang by its side the picture of this mother, weeping over an empty cradle. Human life has two faces, which we must dare to contemplate in turn.

Let me hide, too, these grotesque figures which ornament my chimney-piece. Plato has said that *the beautiful is only the visible form of the good*. If so, the ugly must be the visible form of the evil, and, by constantly beholding it, the mind insensibly deteriorates.

But above all, to encourage feelings of tenderness and pity, let me hang at the foot of my bed this touching picture of the Last Sleep! Never have I been able to look at it without emotion.

An old woman, clothed in rags, is lying by the roadside; her stick is at her feet, and her head rests upon a stone; she has fallen asleep with clasped hands, murmuring a prayer

learned in her childhood ; she sleeps her last sleep, she dreams her last dream !

She sees herself, a strong and happy child, keeping the sheep on the common, gathering the berries from the hedges, singing, courtesying to passers-by, and making the sign of the cross when the first star appears in the sky. Happy time, full of fragrance and sunshine ! She wants nothing, for she does not yet know what to wish for.

But now she has grown up ; the time has come for courageous work : she must cut the corn, thresh the wheat, carry bundles of flowering clover or branches of withered leaves to the farm. If her toil is hard, hope shines like the sun over everything and wipes the drops of sweat away. The growing girl already sees that life is a task ; but she still sings as she works.

By and by the burden becomes heavier : she is a wife, a mother ! She must economize the bread of to-day, must provide for to-morrow ; she must care for the sick and sustain the weak ; she must act the part of an earthly Providence, so easy when God helps us, but so hard when He forsakes us. The woman is still strong, but she is anxious ; she sings no longer !

Yet a few years, and all is dark. The husband's health is broken ; his wife sees him pine away by the lifeless hearth ; cold and hunger and what sickness had begun ; he dies, and his widow sits on the ground by the coffin provided by the charity of others, pressing her two half-naked children in her arms. She dreads the future ; she weeps, and bows her head.

At last the future has come : the children have grown up, but they are no longer with her. Her son is fighting for his flag, and his sister is gone. Both have been lost to her for a long time — perhaps forever ; and the strong girl, the brave wife, the courageous mother is henceforth only an old beggar, without family or home ! She weeps no more, sorrow has conquered her ; she surrenders, and waits for death.

Death, that faithful friend of the wretched, has come : not hideous and mocking, as superstition represents it, but beautiful, smiling, and crowned with stars ! The gentle phantom stoops to the beggar ; her pale lips murmur a few indistinct words, announcing the end of her labors ; a quiet joy possesses the old woman, and, leaning on her strong Deliverer, she has passed unconsciously from her last earthly sleep to eternal peace.

Rest there, poor tired soul! The leaves will be thy shroud. Night will shed her tears of dew upon thee, and the birds will sing sweetly over thee. Thy visit here below will have left no more trace than their flight through the air; thy name is already forgotten, and the only legacy thou hast to leave is the hawthorn stick lying forgotten at thy feet!

Well! some one will take it up—some soldier of that great human army scattered here and there by misery or vice; for thou art not an exception, but an instance; and under the same sun which shines so benignly upon all, in the midst of these flowering vineyards, this ripe corn, and these wealthy cities, whole generations suffer, and succeed each other, bequeathing to each the beggar's staff!

The sight of this sad face shall make me more grateful for what God has given me, and more compassionate for those whom He has treated with less indulgence; it shall be for me a lesson and a subject for reflection.

Ah! if we could watch for all that might improve and instruct us; if our daily lives were so disposed as to be a constant school for our minds: but often we take no heed of these things. Man is an eternal mystery to

himself ; his own being is a house into which he never enters, and whose exterior alone he studies. We need to have always before us the famous inscription which Socrates once saw engraved on the walls of Delphi by an unknown hand :

“KNOW THYSELF.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF THE YEAR.

DECEMBER 30TH, P.M. — I was in bed, hardly recovered from the delirious fever which had held me so long between life and death. My weakened brain was making an effort to recover its activity ; my thoughts, like rays of light struggling through the clouds, were still confused and imperfect ; sometimes there was a return of the dizziness which made chaos of all my ideas, and I floated, so to speak, between alternate fits of bewilderment and consciousness.

Sometimes everything seemed plain to me, like the view which, from the top of some high mountain, opens before us in clear weather. We distinguish water, woods, vil-

lages, cattle, even the cottage perched on the edge of the ravine; then suddenly comes a gust of wind laden with mist, and all is hidden!

Yielding to the fluctuations of half-recovered reason, I let my mind follow its various impulses without trying to distinguish the real from the unreal; I glided softly from one to the other and my dreams and waking thoughts quickly succeeded each other.

But, while my mind wanders in this uncertainty, see, under the clock which measures the hours with its loud ticking, a woman's form appears before me!

The first glance convinced me that she was not a daughter of Eve. In her eye was the last flash of a fading star, and her face had the pallor of supreme agony. Clothed in draperies of a thousand changing colors of the brightest and most sombre hues, she held a withered garland in her hand.

After having looked at her for some moments I asked her name, and what brought her to my attic. Her eyes, which were following the movements of the clock, turned toward me, and she said:

"I am the year just drawing to its close; I come to receive your thanks and your farewell."

I raised myself on my elbow, in surprise, which soon gave place to bitter resentment.

"Ah! you come to be thanked," I cried; "but first let us see what you have brought me?"

"When I welcomed your coming I was still young and vigorous: you have taken from me each day a little of my strength, and at last you have sent me illness; already, thanks to you, my blood is less warm, my muscles are less firm, and my footsteps less quick than before! You have planted within me the germs of infirmity; where the summer flowers of life were growing you have maliciously sown the nettles of old age!"

"And, as if it was not enough to weaken my body, you have also weakened the powers of my soul; you have extinguished her enthusiasm; she has become more sluggish and timid. Formerly her eyes generously embraced all humanity; but you have made her near-sighted, and now she scarcely sees beyond herself!"

"That is what you have done for my inner self; as to my outward life, see to what grief, neglect, and misery you have reduced it!"

"While fever has for so many days kept me chained to this bed, who has taken care of

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this home, in which I placed all my joy? Shall I not find my closets empty, my book-case bare, all my poor treasures lost through negligence or dishonesty? Where are the plants I cultivated, the birds I fed? All are gone; my attic is despoiled, silent, solitary!

"Only just coming back to the consciousness of what surrounds me, I do not even know who has nursed me through my long illness! No doubt some hireling, who left me when my resources were exhausted!

"And what will my masters, for whom I work, say to my absence? At this time of the year, when business is most pressing, can they have done without me? will they have been willing even to try to do so? Perhaps I am already superseded in the humble place where I earned my daily bread! And it is you alone, wicked daughter of Time, who have brought all these misfortunes: strength, health, comfort, work—you have taken all away. I have only received outrage and loss from you, and yet you dare to claim my gratitude!

"Ah! die then, since your time has come; but die despised and cursed; and may I write on your tomb the epitaph which the Arabian poet inscribed upon that of a king:

" ' Rejoice, thou passer-by : he whom we have buried here cannot live again.' "

I was waked by a hand taking hold of mine ; and opening my eyes, I recognized the doctor.

After feeling my pulse he nodded his head, sat down at the foot of the bed, and looked at me, rubbing his nose with his snuff-box. I have since found that this was a sign of satisfaction with the doctor.

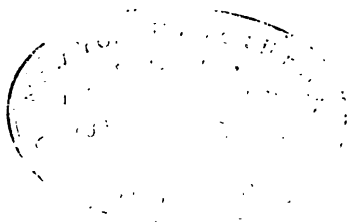
" Well ! so we wanted old snub-nose to carry us off ? " said M. Lambert, in his half-joking, half-scolding way. " What a deuce of a hurry we were in ! We had to hold you back with both arms at least ! "

" Then you had given me up, doctor ? " I asked, a little startled.

" Not at all," replied the old physician. " We can't give up what we have not got ; and I make it a rule never to have any hope. We are but instruments in the hands of Providence, and each of us should say with Ambroise Paré : ' I tend him ; God cures him ! ' "

" May He be blessed, then, as well as you," cried I ; " and may health come back to me with the new year ! "

M. Lambert shrugged his shoulders.



"Begin by asking yourself for it," he announced bluntly. "God gives it to you, and it is your own sense, and not chance, that must keep it for you. One would think, to hear people talk, that sickness comes upon us like the rain or the sunshine, while we have not a word to say in the matter. Before we complain of being ill we should prove that we deserve to be well."

I wanted to smile, but the doctor looked angry.

"Ah, you think I am joking!" resumed he, raising his voice; "but tell me, then, which of us gives his health the same attention that he gives to his business? Do you economize your strength as you economize your money? Do you avoid excess and imprudence with the same care with which you steer clear of extravagance or foolish speculations? Do you care as much for your way of living as for your income? Do you consider every evening what has been wholesome or unwholesome for you with the same care that you bring to the examination of your business? You may smile; but have you not brought this illness on yourself by a thousand indiscretions?"

I began to protest against this, and asked him to point out these indiscretions. The old

doctor spread out his fingers, and began to reckon upon them one by one.

"*Primo*," cried he, "want of exercise. You live here like a mouse in a cheese, without air, exercise, or change. Consequently, the blood circulates badly, the fluids thicken, the inactive muscles do not claim their share of nutrition, the stomach flags, and the brain grows weary.

"*Secundo*. Irregular food. Caprice is your cook; your stomach is a slave who must accept what you give it, but who presently takes a sullen revenge, like all slaves.

"*Tertio*. Sitting up late. Instead of using the night for sleep you spend it in reading; your bedstead is a bookcase, your pillow a desk; when the tired brain demands rest you lead it to an orgy, and are surprised to find it the worse for it next day.

"*Quarto*. Luxurious habits. Shut up in your attic, you insensibly surround yourself with a thousand effeminate indulgences. You must have list for your door, a blind for your window, a carpet for your feet, an easy-chair stuffed with wool for your back, your fire lighted at the first sign of cold, and a shade for your lamp; and, thanks to all these precautions, the least draught makes you catch

cold, common chairs give you no rest, and you must wear spectacles in order to bear the light of day. You have thought you were acquiring comforts, and you have only contracted infirmities.

“*Quinto*”—

“Ah, enough, enough, doctor!” cried I. “Pray do not push your examination further; do not attach a sense of remorse to each of my pleasures.”

The old doctor rubbed his nose with his snuff-box.

“You see,” said he more gently, as he got up, “you want to escape from the truth. You shrink from inquiry—a proof that you are guilty. *Habemus confitentem reum!* But at least, dear fellow, do not go on laying the blame on Time, like an old woman.”

Again feeling my pulse, he took his leave, declaring that his function was at an end, and that the rest depended upon me.

When the doctor was gone I began to reflect.

Though his words were too sweeping, they had a basis of truth. How often we accuse chance of an illness whose cause we should seek in ourselves! Perhaps it would have been wiser to let him finish the examination he had begun.

But is not what concerns the health of the soul of more importance than what concerns the health of the body? Am I so sure of having neglected nothing to preserve that intact during the year now ending? Have I, as one of God's soldiers upon earth, kept my courage and my arms efficient? Shall I be ready for the great review of souls which must pass before HIM WHO IS in the dark valley of Jehoshaphat?

Do you dare to examine yourself, my soul, and see how often you have erred?

First, you have erred through pride! for I have not sufficiently valued the lowly. Drinking too deeply the intoxicating wine of genius, I too have found no relish in pure water. I have disdained words which had no other beauty than their sincerity; I have ceased to love men just because they are men — I have loved them for their superiority; I have contracted the world within the limits of a pantheon, and my sympathy has been awakened by admiration only. I have let the common crowd of my brothers in hope or sorrow pass by me as carelessly as if they were a flock of sheep. I am indignant with the man rolling in wealth who despises the poor man; and yet, vain of my useless knowl-

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edge, I despise him who is poor in mind — I scorn poverty of intellect as others do poverty of dress ; I take credit for what I have not earned, and turn a gift into a weapon of offence.

Ah ! if, in the worst days of revolution, ignorance has revolted and raised a cry of hatred against genius, the fault is not alone in the envious malice of ignorance, but comes in part from the contemptuous pride of knowledge.

Alas ! I have too completely forgotten the fable of the two sons of the magician of Bagdad.

One of them, touched by irrevocable fate, was born blind, while the other enjoyed all the pleasures of sight. Proud of his own advantages, he laughed at his brother's blindness, and scorned him as a companion. One morning the blind boy wished to go out with him.

"To what purpose," said he, "since the gods have given us nothing in common ? For me creation is a stage, where a thousand charming scenes and wonderful actors appear in succession ; for you it is only a dark abyss, where you hear the confused murmur of an invisible world. Stay alone in your darkness,

and leave the pleasures of light to those for whom the day-star shines."

With these words he went away, and his brother, left alone, began to cry bitterly. His father, who heard him, came to him at once, and tried to comfort him by promising him whatever he wished.

"Can you give me sight?" asked the child.

"Fate will not allow it," said the magician.

"Then," cried the blind boy eagerly, "I ask you to put out the sun!"

Who knows whether my pride has not provoked the same wish on the part of some of my brothers who do not see?

But how much oftener have I erred through carelessness and want of thought! How many resolutions have I taken at random! how many judgments have I pronounced for the sake of a witticism! how much mischief have I done for lack of any sense of responsibility! Most men harm one another for the sake of doing something. We laugh at the honor of one, and compromise the reputation of another, like the idle man who saunters along a hedge-row, breaking the young branches and destroying the most beautiful flowers.

And yet by this very thoughtlessness the fame of some men is created. It rises gradually, like one of those mysterious mounds in barbarous countries, to which a stone is added by every passer-by; each one brings something to add to it at random, not seeing whether he is raising a pedestal or a gibbet. Who would dare look behind him, to see his rash judgments held up to view?

Some time ago I was walking along the edge of the green mound where the Montmartre telegraph stands. Below me, along one of the zigzag paths which wind up the hill, a man and a girl were walking, to whom my attention was called. The man wore a shaggy coat, which gave him some resemblance to a wild beast; he held a thick stick in his hand, with which he described various strange figures in the air. He spoke very loud, and in a voice which seemed to me shaking with passion. He raised his eyes now and then with an expression of savage harshness, and it seemed to me that he was reproaching or threatening the girl, and that she was listening to him with touching submission. Two or three times she ventured a few words, as if trying to justify herself; but the man in the great-coat began again immediately with

his loud and angry voice, his savage look, and his threatening evolutions in the air. I watched him, vainly trying to catch a word as he passed, until he disappeared behind the hill.

I had evidently just seen one of those domestic tyrants whose sullen temper is excited by the patience of his victims, and who, though having the power to be the beneficent god of the family, chooses rather to be its tormentor.

I cursed the unknown savage in my heart, and was indignant that such crimes against the sacred peace of home could not be punished as they deserve, when I heard his voice coming nearer. He had turned the path, and soon appeared before me at the top of the slope.

My first glance, and his first words, explained everything to me: in place of what I had taken for the furious tones and terrible looks of an angry man, and the attitude of a frightened victim, I had before me only an honest citizen, who squinted and stuttered, but who was explaining the management of silk-worms to his attentive daughter.

I turned homeward, laughing at my mistake; but before reaching my faubourg I saw

the crowd running, I heard calls for help, and every finger pointed in the same direction to a distant column of flame. A factory had taken fire, and everybody was rushing forward to help in putting out the fire.

I hesitated. Night was coming on; I was tired; a favorite book was awaiting me: I thought there would be no lack of helpers, and I went on my way.

Just now I had erred from want of consideration; now it was from selfishness and cowardice.

But what! have I not on a thousand occasions forgotten the duties binding us to our fellow-men? Is this the first time I have avoided paying my dues to society? Have I not always treated my companions like a lion? Have I not claimed successively every one's share? If any one is so ill advised as to ask me to return some little portion I get provoked. I am angry. I try to escape from it by every means possible. How many times, when I have seen a beggar crouching at the end of the street, have I not gone out of my way, for fear that compassion would force me to be charitable! How often have I doubted the misfortunes of others, so that I might harden my heart against them! With what satis-

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faction have I sometimes attested the vices of the poor man, to show that his misery is deserved !

Oh, let us not go further — let us not go further ! I interrupted the doctor's examination, but how much sadder is this ! We pity the diseases of the body ; we shudder at those of the soul.

I was happily disturbed in my reverie by my neighbor, the old soldier.

Now I think of it, I seem always to have seen, during my fever, the form of this good old man, sometimes leaning over my bed, and sometimes sitting at his table in the midst of his sheets of pasteboard.

He has just come in with his glue-pot, his quire of green paper, and his great scissors. I called him by his name ; he uttered a joyful exclamation, and came near me.

"Well, so the ball is found again !" cried he, taking my two hands in the maimed one which was left him ; "it has not been without trouble, I can tell you ; the campaign has been long enough to win two stripes. I have seen many fellows beat the drum while the fever was on them. At Leipsic I had a neighbor who fancied a chimney was on fire in his stomach, and who was always calling for the

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fire-engines; but the third day it all went out of itself. But with you it has lasted twenty-eight days — as long as one of the Little Corporal's campaigns."

"I am not mistaken, then; you were near me?"

"Well, I had only to cross the passage. This left hand has not made you a bad nurse for want of the right; but, bah! you did not know what hand gave you drink, and it did not prevent that beggar of a fever from being drowned out — for all the world like Poniatowski in the Elster."

The old soldier began to laugh, and I, too much moved to speak, pressed his hand against my breast. He saw my emotion, and hastened to put an end to it.

"By the by, you know that from to-day you have a right to draw your rations again," resumed he gayly; "four meals like the German *meinherrs* — nothing more! The doctor is your house steward."

"We must find the cook, too," said I, with a smile.

"She is found," said the veteran.

"Who is she?"

"Genevieve."

"The fruit-woman?"



"Well, so the ball is found again!" cried he.

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"While I am talking she is cooking for you, neighbor; and do not fear her sparing either butter or trouble. As long as you were between life and death the honest woman passed her time going up and down stairs to see which way the battle went. And, stay; I am sure this is she."

We heard steps in the passage, and he went to open the door.

"Well!" continued he, "it is Mother Millot, our portress, another of your good friends, neighbor, whose poultices I recommend to you. Come in, Mother Millot, come in; we are bonny boys this morning, and ready to dance a minuet if we had our slippers."

The portress came in, quite delighted. She brought my linen, carefully washed and mended, with a little bottle of Spanish wine, the gift of her sailor son, and kept for great occasions. I would have thanked her, but the good woman imposed silence upon me, under the pretext that the doctor had forbidden me to speak. I saw her arrange everything in my drawers, whose neatness I noticed; an attentive hand had evidently put to rights each day the unavoidable disorder which sickness causes.

As she finished, Genevieve came with my

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dinner; she was followed by Mother Denis, the milkwoman over the way, who had learned, at the same time, of my danger and of my convalescence. The good Savoyard brought me a new-laid egg, which she herself wished to see me eat.

It was necessary to tell her minutely all about my illness. At every detail she uttered loud exclamations; then, when the portress warned her to be less noisy, she excused herself in a whisper. They made a circle around me to see me eat my dinner; each mouthful was accompanied by expressions of satisfaction and gratitude. Never had the king of France, when he dined in public, excited such admiration among the spectators.

As they were taking the dinner away my colleague, the old cashier, entered in his turn.

I could not keep my heart from beating as I recognized him. How would the heads of the firm look upon my absence, and what had he to tell me?

I waited with inexpressible anxiety for him to speak; but he sat down by me, took my hand, and began to rejoice over my recovery, without saying a word about our masters. I could not endure this uncertainty any longer.

"And Messieurs Durmer," I asked hesitatingly, "how have they taken — the interruption to my work?"

"There has been no interruption," replied the old clerk quietly.

"What do you mean?"

"Each one in the office took a share of your duty; all has gone on as usual, and Messieurs Durmer have seen no difference."

This was too much. After so many signs of affection, this filled up the measure. I could not keep back my tears.

Thus the few services I had been able to do for others had been returned a hundred-fold! I had sown a little seed, and every grain had fallen on good ground, and brought forth a whole sheaf. Ah, this completes the doctor's lesson! If it is true that diseases, whether of the mind or body, are the fruit of our follies and vices, sympathy and affection are also the rewards of accomplished duty. Each of us, with God's help, and within the narrow limits of human power, makes his own disposition, his character, and his future.

Every one has gone; the old soldier has brought back my flowers and my birds, and they are my only companions. The setting

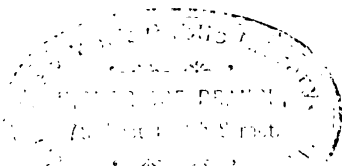
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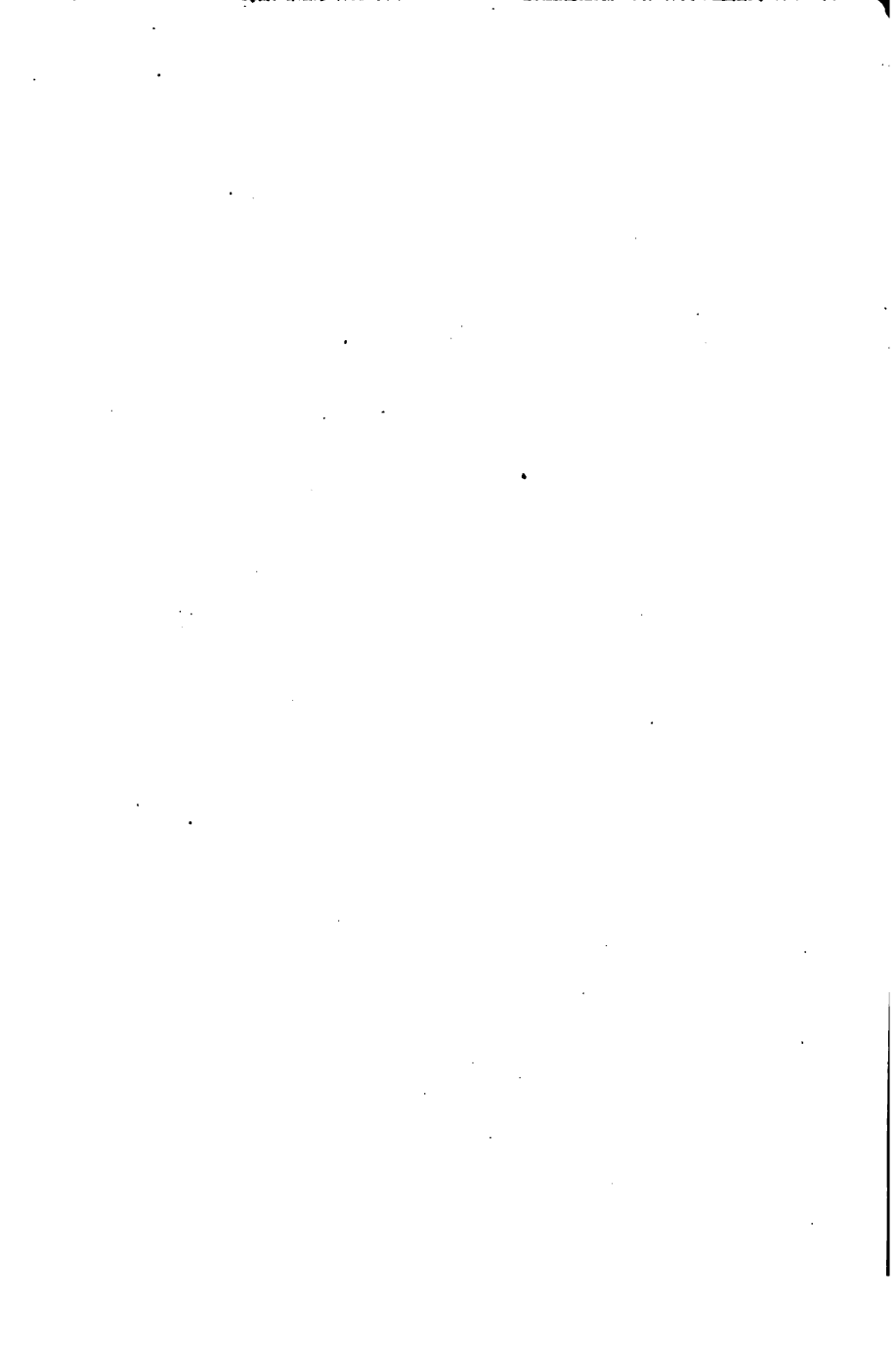
sun reddens my half-closed curtains. My brain is clear, and my heart light. A thin mist floats before my eyes, and I am in that blessed state which precedes refreshing sleep.

Yonder, opposite the bed, the pale goddess in her drapery of a thousand changing hues, and with her withered garland, again appears before me ; but this time I hold out my hand to her with a grateful smile.

“Adieu, beloved year, whom I but now unjustly accused. What I have suffered must not be laid to thee ; for thou wast but a tract through which God had marked out my way — a field where I reaped the harvest I had sown. I will love thee, wayside shelter, for those hours of happiness thou hast given me to enjoy ; I will love thee even for the suffering thou hast given me to endure. Neither happiness nor suffering came from thee ; thou hast been only the stage where they have been enacted. Fall peacefully, then, into eternity, and be blest, — thou who hast left me experience in place of youth, sweet memories instead of time past, and gratitude in payment for good deeds !”

THE END.





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